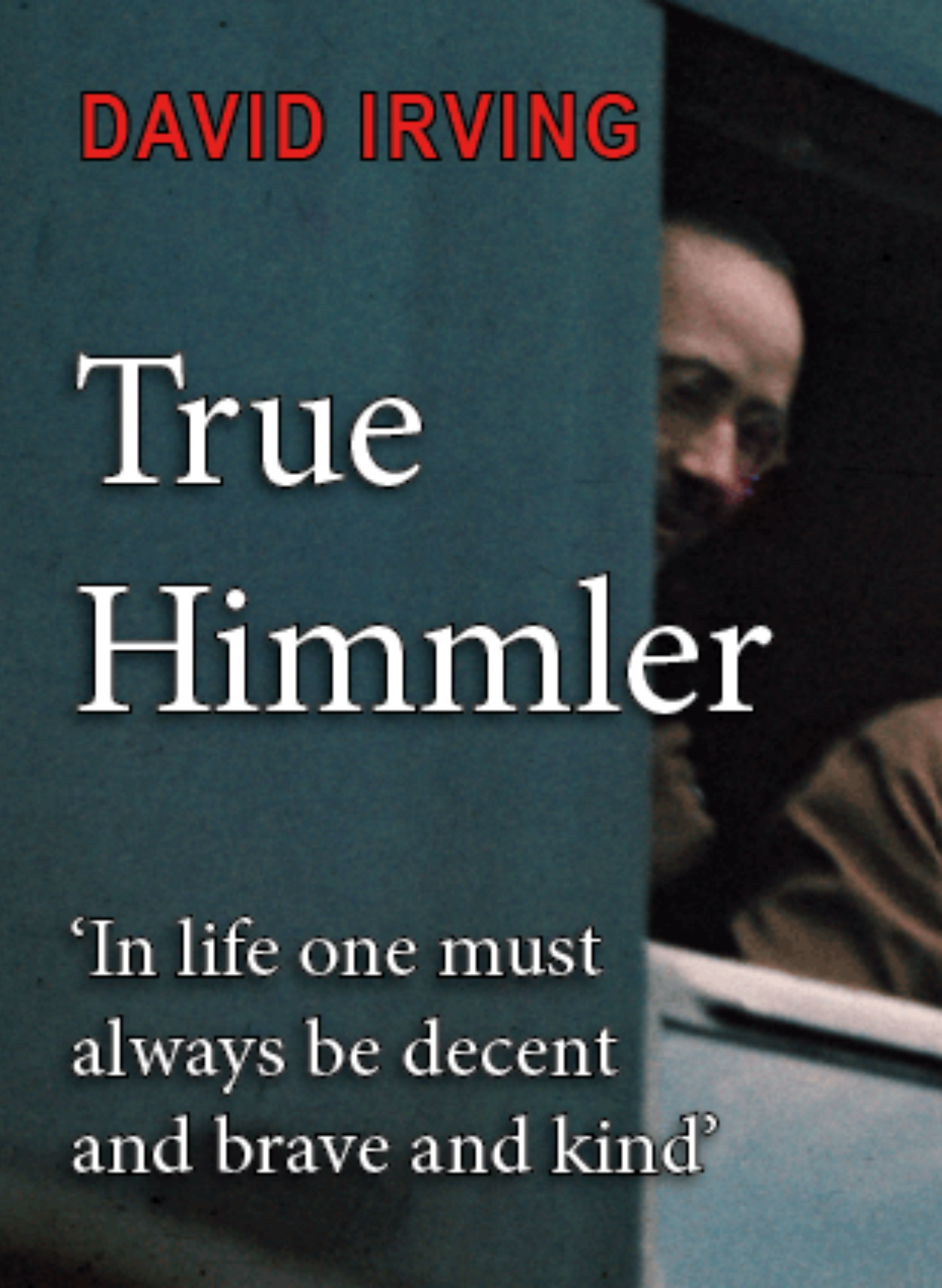
DAVID IRVING

True Himmler

'In life one must always be decent and brave and kind'



Christmas gift to Dr Joseph Goebbels, 1936

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1: *A Murder in Lüneburg*

WHEN LIVED TO ITS full extent, a human life is a mansion of many rooms. That is what Heinrich Himmler had been brought up as a child to believe. But that was then, and this was now.

To British eyes he cut a wretched figure, clad in an army shirt, socks, and underpants, and tripping over the grey blanket he clutched around his waist. Soldiers escorted him without ceremony up the six rain-soaked cement steps into the patrician house in Lüneburg in northern Germany, and bundled him into the octagonal front room.

It was May 23, 1945. He was still young – only forty-four – but no fool: he may have sensed that this unseemly room, with its nineteenth-century red plush furniture, was the last room of all. Lieutenant-Colonel Michael 'Spud' Murphy, who was escorting him, would write that he had brought Himmler over to this house which he had had 'prepared for such men as Himmler.'

Such men? Underlying the innocence of those few words there was something more sinister. Winston Churchill had himself drafted a secret directive for the Allied leaders to sign, proposing a list of fifty to one hundred Germans of high office, declaring them to be 'world outlaws.' They were to be executed immediately upon mere identification. 'It would seem that the method of trials, conviction and judicial sentence is quite inappropriate,' he argued, 'for notorious ringleaders

such as Hitler, Himmler, Goering, Goebbels, and Ribbentrop.' The question of their fate was, he said, surely a political one.

Only a few knew of the existence of this secret directive.*

What happened next to Himmler is on the official record, and we can briefly summarise it from the words of those involved: Stripped for the second time that evening, naked but for his boots and stocking'd feet, and searched once more for the ubiquitous suicide capsule which all the guiltier "Nazis" were suspected of carrying, he stood in the centre of the room, surrounded by a dozen or so burly British officers and soldiers who offered various excuses to be present.

The British Army medic, Captain C J L Wells – 'Jimmie' Wells to his pals – was ten years older than the former Reichsführer SS. He began a thorough body-search which needs no description other than that Wells concluded by asking the prisoner to open his mouth. Glinting at the back of the teeth, so he wrote, the doctor thought he saw a capsule with a dot, and he asked the prisoner to step over to the window so he could get a better look. Himmler's back would thus be briefly turned to every other man in that room except the doctor. The doctor ordered the prisoner to open his mouth again, and tried to thrust his fingers inside to stop him crushing the glass capsule.

That was it, the final moment. Himmler snapped his jaw shut and crunched the glass poison phial – wrote Wells; his head fell forward, and his face turned a deep purple. For several minutes the British officers tried to resuscitate him – holding him upside down, forcing his head into a water basin, even (according to Murphy) passing a needle and thread through his tongue to try to haul it out.

Thus, as said, the official account of Himmler's death: a suicide.

It has gone down in history, and it is a story, untrue from start to finish.

* In a memorandum countersigned by President Roosevelt on September 17, 1944 Churchill had urged that after the arrest of top 'Nazis,' the nearest General Officer should have them 'shot within six hours without reference to higher authority,' having limited himself to 'establishing their identity.' Stalin refused to agree with this procedure, and at Yalta on February 9, 1945 Churchill again suggested that such men 'should be shot as soon as they were caught and their identity established.'

WE HAVE TWO versions written by Dr Wells, who returned to London on the day following these events. He wrote the first for the War Office; the second for his wife Vera, more personal and vivid. Both accounts omit significant details.

The episode had begun for him with an order from Second Army to stand by at headquarters – this house in Uelzener Strasse, Lüneburg. Company Sergeant Major Edwin Joseph Austin, a burly man from Surrey, England, met the doctor there, and teased him about somebody being brought over from the Civilian Interrogation Camp No 031 at Barnstedt – the former Marlag Milag Nord. Austin himself had only just heard who the man was.

'I was in little mood for guessing games,' wrote Wells to Vera. 'But as we walked up and down getting colder and colder it was obvious that Austin was more anxious to tell me the answer than I was to guess it. At last he confided that we were going to see a prisoner of war – a very important prisoner of war. Now could I guess? It was unfortunate for me – and I felt deeply reproached – that I had not studied more closely the leaders of the German nation: their faces or their other physical attributes or their moral imperfections. As men they did not interest me. To me . . . they were all equally evil.'

Cold and bored after a while, the two men decided to wait inside the building, leaving a corporal outside. Wells looked around the CSM's office. 'Everything was spotless, the oilcloth on the floor was polished to reflect your boots, the table was exactly in the middle of the room, the blotter was exactly in the middle of the table and the bare light bulb exactly in the middle of the ceiling. There was no fire, no curtains, and the straight-backed chairs were placed like soldiers with a meticulous accuracy round the room.' He sensed an atmosphere, he wrote, 'of justice without mercy.' Told the prisoner would be Himmler, Wells wondered what function he was to perform.

The two cars bringing Himmler from the Barnstedt camp had set out at about ten-fifteen p.m., according to Thirty Corps' war diary. Himmler had told Captain C Smith, the camp's chief interrogator, that 'he wished to speak to an officer on the staff of Field Marshal Montgomery.' (He was carrying a letter for Montgomery). He confirmed his identity to Colonel Mike Osborn, of Tactical HQ,

British 2nd Army; he had already given it to Selvester, commander of the camp at Barnstedt. He wished, he said, to surrender – he could save what was left, to fight against Russia alongside the Allies; and he had vital information which he would disclose only to Montgomery. Murphy told him that Admiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg who signed Germany's surrender had 'taken poison' that day, and he would not risk that again. (Friedeburg had succeeded Karl Dönitz as navy commander.) Himmler's face fell: he had known Friedeburg well, and his 'suicide' disturbed him. That was not like the admiral he knew. He too had expected different treatment, as a defeated commanding officer who had surrendered. He repeated to Rice that he had volunteered his real identity to Selvester.

Osborn and Murphy were in the first car with the prisoner, and majors K Randell and Storm Rice (both from the Operations and Policy branch) in the second. Murphy sat in the back, covering Himmler with a revolver. When the driver briefly lost his way, Himmler interrupted them to offer, 'You are on the road to Lüneburg.' If he was concealing anything in his mouth, it did not prevent him from speaking or munching thick army sandwiches. There were no gaps in his teeth, as the dental record and casts taken later show.

The cars arrived at ten forty-five. Murphy was the first man out. They manhandled Himmler into the building. He now had fewer than thirty minutes to live. Major Norman Whittaker, the unit's commanding officer, saw him as 'a cringing figure,' as he recorded in a personal diary, one 'who knew the game was up,' truculent and unhelpful. Himmler said that he had planned to lie low until the British had 'got over the first flush of victory.' He asked to be brought to General Dwight D. Eisenhower – perhaps he said Montgomery – for a face to face interview, he would not talk with mere 'underlings.'

Attempts to question him produced only a statement about the menace of communism, and the rift developing between Moscow and the western Allies. Had he been in Berlin when Hitler killed himself, he continued, he would have chosen to die with him. MI5 was brought in, before the doctor came; first an MI5 agent, unnamed, conducted a 'gentle interrogation' of Himmler, as the senior intelligence and security officer in 21 Army Group Headquarters recorded

in a pencil note on the last page of documentation on Himmler's arrest. The note stated no less enigmatically that 'this story' was agreed by Neil McDermott, KC, who was GSO1 (Int b) at 21 Army Group; it is likely that he was referring to MI5 agent Lieutenant-Colonel Sidney Noakes, Noakes was later also a lawyer, five years younger than Himmler, and died in 1993. No record of the MI5 interrogations has been released to the public domain. Noakes' next of kin retained numerous keepsakes of these final minutes of Himmler's life.

Himmler was pushed into the villa's parlour. A few religious oleographs hung crooked on the walls. The illusion that he was being brought to General Sir Miles Dempsey, Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery, or Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, lasted just a few seconds more. Seeking to identify him beyond question, the officers told him to sign his name, and he executed for the last time the famous jagged scrawl, on a sheet of paper. The men studied it and nodded. The twelve-foot square room had filled with officers. Randell and Rice waited in the hallway outside. Realising that he was going nowhere, Himmler took back the sheet of paper, with the ink still wet, and tore it into forty-eight pieces: that would stop his captors from writing whatever statement they wanted above it.

Company Sergeant-Major Austin pointed to the couch. 'That's your bed,' he said in German. 'Get undressed.' In a BBC interview the next day, he described: Himmler 'looked at me, and then looked at an interpreter and said, "He doesn't know who I am." I said, "Yes, I do. You're *Himm*-lah. But still that's your bed. Get undressed." He tried to stare me out. But I stared at him back . . . and eventually he dropped his eyes, and sat down on the bed and started to take *orf* his underpants.'

COLONEL MURPHY WAS NO ORDINARY officer. He had the highest security clearance; he was one of a small group 'indoctrinated' in the Enigma codebreaking secret. He had pushed into the surrender negotiations in Montgomery's tent on Lüneburg Heath earlier that month – he is there in the official photos, and in the painting of the scene by war-artist Terence Cuneo.

Paying no attention to Austin, Colonel Murphy rudely spoke to

Wells: 'Are you the doctor? You will examine this prisoner for poison.'

The doctor retorted: 'I am a doctor, not a detective.' He took an instant dislike to Murphy. 'Everything looked new,' he wrote to Vera. 'He looked new, his uniform looked new, his red tabs and the hat band looked newer still.' Wells hated this whole scenario. It may have been, he later admitted to his wife, that in the semi-darkness Murphy could not see that he was an older man, and deserved respect.

Colonel Murphy snapped back: 'You will do as you are told.'

Wells followed him into the front room where Himmler was being ordered to strip naked. 'This was too much for me. Now we were properly on the wrong foot. There he stood shivering, far more from physical exposure than from fear, though fear too was obviously present in the mind of this suspicious and superstitious man. One could feel his mind working: If this was the way the British were going to treat him – well, what was the good? . . . I felt, maybe wrongly sometimes, that anyone who has held, or is holding, high office, however rotten he may be, and again more especially when he is a beaten enemy, should be treated with a reasonable courtesy.'

He had not been informed of the Churchill directive; and the others had been sworn to abide by the Official Secrets Act.

Dr Wells asked Murphy and the other men to leave the room, leaving him alone with Himmler and the sergeant-major. He asked the 'goofy corporal,' as he called him, to leave. In a whispered exchange, he asked Austin why poison might be suspected. The sergeant-major replied that only a week earlier (in fact on May 16), they had brought in SS *Obergruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann, one of the highest ranking SS men, who had 'committed suicide,' crushed a poison phial concealed in his mouth. An odd remark, because it was not strictly true – Prützmann died in British hands, but not for two or three more weeks, and not here in Lüneburg, and probably not by suicide.

The doctor examined the former Reichsführer SS with some curiosity. According to Austin, speaking on the BBC next day, 'He looked between his toes, all over his body, under his armpits, in his ears, behind his ears, in his hair, and then he came to his mouth. He asked Himmler to open his mouth. He did, and he ran his tongue

around his lips quite easily, but the doctor wasn't satisfied. He asked him to come nearer to the light. He came nearer to the light and opened his mouth.'

Dr Wells described to his wife that the hands were delicate and the finger nails trimmed to a point, 'which in a man I have always coupled, probably quite wrongly, with sex perversion.' As a qualified dentist too, he studied the teeth clearly as Company Sergeant-Major Austin shone a bright light into the mouth (according to him, though not to Austin himself).

'They were goodish teeth with a certain number of Gold fillings and some small round amalgam ones in the fissures of his molars, the cups of which were rather unduly flattened, I thought.'

What he also saw, he wrote, was a small blue tit-like object sticking out of the lower sulcus, or groove, inside the left cheek.

'That was something abnormal,' he felt. 'That more likely was it.'

He lunged for the mouth, he wrote, but Himmler forestalled him, and chomped the capsule.

Rather incoherently Sergeant-Major Austin told the BBC the next day: 'The doctor tried to put two fingers into his mouth to 'ave a, 'ave a, uh, good look inside, I, uh, suspected, and Himmler . . . drew his head away, and, clamping down on the doctor's fingers, crushed the phial of poison which he had been carrying in his mouth for hours. The doctor said, "'e's *done* it!" and the colonel [Murphy] and I instinctively jumped to him, the doctor held him by the throat as he was falling and tried to make him, uh, spit out the poison which he was swallowing, and the colonel and I held him.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER LAY DYING IN AGONY on the floor. Company-Sergeant-Major Austin picked up the horn-rimmed glasses and pocketed them, mouthing one word to the doctor: 'Souvenir.'

From nowhere a dozen or so officers flooded into the room. Unusually, Whittaker felt it necessary to record in his unit diary the names of those now present; there is no indication as to why. Murphy, the young Intelligence colonel, was nowhere to be seen (said the doctor: which conflicts with Austin's version); he had retired to the lavatory, and was throwing up violently. Wells described to Vera:

'I went to him and from outside the lavatory door inquired of him. He replied gruffly that he was all right, which of course was quite untrue. I hated him – arrogant little pup. If he didn't let me in, I'd kick the door down. I returned to the room to be shortly followed by the colonel, now with a pea-green tinge to his complexion.'

Dr Wells's actual feelings on the day may have been more detached than he suggested to his wife. Major Whittaker wrote: 'Jimmie the dentist wanted to take out a couple of teeth as souvenirs but I said "No." A good thing, as various doctors and dentists came to take measurements. What a party!' There were scuff marks defacing the polished floor, suggesting that someone had put up quite a fight.

As Dr Wells moved toward the door, Brigadier Edgar Williams, 21st Army Group chief of Intelligence, arrived. Wells told him that Himmler was dead. Williams used comforting words: 'It was a very good thing,' he said, 'that the country should be saved the expense of a long legal investigation into the unending crimes of at least one "Nazi" criminal' – words which may well convey more to historians than they did at the time to the country doctor.

Outside the building Dr Wells ran into 'a little man with the green beret of the Intelligence Corps.'

They chatted over a whisky and water, and the unnamed 'little man' told him of other occasions on which captured Germans had 'suddenly fallen down dead.' Suicides, evidently; or perhaps not.

AT SIX A.M. THE NEXT DAY Murphy wired his first and possibly only report to General Sir Miles Dempsey. It was curiously precise:

> WISH TO ADVISE RIECHSFUHRER [*sic*] HEINRICH HIMMLER COMMANDER OF GERMAN SS FORCES COMMITTED SUICIDE BY POISON AT 23.14 HOURS, 23RD MAY, 1945 WHILST IN CUSTODY. ALL ATTEMPTS TO RESUSCITATE THE PRISONER FAILED. DECEASED PERSON MADE NO ADMISSIONS OR STATEMENTS OTHER THAN TO CONFIRM HIS IDENTITY. MEDICAL REPORT AND WITNESSED STATEMENT WILL FOLLOW.*

* Now in private hands in Australia.

At eleven a.m., May 24, Colonel Murphy telexed to Brigadier Williams at 21st Army Group. 'Heinrich Himmler committed suicide at 232305B [11:05 p.m., May 23] at a house in Lüneburg. No possible doubt of identity. Method used was phial of cyanide of potassium concealed in mouth. All possible steps taken to prevent this without success. Details follow.' Williams of course already knew; he had been there. We note the renewed emphasis on *identification*.

FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS HIMMLER'S REMAINS lay unmoved on that bare floor, his face bruised and swollen, half covered with a frayed British Army blanket, naked except for British Army socks and a khaki shirt. An ornate chandelier hung above his lifeless eyes. The red plush furniture had been pushed aside to make more room. At five p.m. on May 24 Fleet-Street journalists were brought in to view the remains – the Second Army press camp was just down the road.

Colonel Murphy pulled back the grey army blanket and observed with finality: 'There he is – he's very dead.' Veteran war correspondent Selkirk Panton noticed a trickle of congealed blood running down the neck from the right corner of Himmler's mouth; it was later wiped away. The hands were folded across his chest and there were tortoiseshell spectacles perched on the corpse's nose – not his own, as those had been smashed by somebody's punch. 'Beside it,' observed *The Manchester Guardian* reporter, 'are a bucket and a cup and some splashes of water made while British Army doctors laboured for fifteen minutes to save Himmler's life' – splashes which one might have expected to dry since then.

American and Soviet army representatives followed at six p.m., brought in to view the body, and they were handed 'the relevant photographs and reports.' Several photographs, both official and unofficial, were taken of the body; a movie film was made, and a war-artist came in to make sketches for a painting: the artist pencilled notes on the 'khaki shirt' in which the naked body had been re-dressed, the 'chintz' lampshade, the small table, and window blind, and the 'marching boots' lying next to the body.

FORMAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE BODY WAS, in the circumstances,

deemed necessary. On the following morning, May 25, the British Army's Deputy Director of Medical Services came with his dental officer and a mortuary assistant and lab technician 'to take certain measurements,' as Whittaker recorded. They took fingerprints, they checked the shape of the body's ears, finger nails and teeth, and made plaster casts of his hands and lower jaw, and cut off tufts of the hair as souvenirs; Major G R Atkins took a death-mask in plaster.

Captain Bond, a pathologist of 74 Brigade, performed a cursory examination with Major Atkins, his dental officer. It was *not* a formal autopsy, and there was no internal examination. The report, now in private hands, is in Bond's handwriting; it was captioned 'Post Mortem examination to establish identification carried out at 11.00 hours 25.5.45.' It remarked on the bruising, but not the broken nose.

The examination continued throughout the day. A surgeon cut open the cranium and removed the brain for shipment to England – the same indignity had been inflicted on Benito Mussolini, Robert Ley, and other notables, as an unspoken assertion of the absolute rights of victors over their enemies. Selkirk Panton teletyped to his London office: 'They took dead mans fingerprints. They examined his body minutely for any special marks. They examined his nails. They took casts of his teeth. They measured exactly every one of his limbs etwhole [*sic*] body. Finally they made death mask thus preserving for posterity face of archfiend of twentieth century. While this was going on in Lueneburg British offers were playing cat etmouse [*sic*] game with Himmlers two ess ess bodyguards ten miles away at POW cage at Barnstedt.' Panton reported that the file sent to London in the plane together with the SS bodyguards Macher and Grothmann included 'all the records of conversations with Himmler before he crushed the glass suicide phial in his mouth.'

If that was so, none has been released to the archives.

COLONEL MURPHY DIRECTED MAJOR WHITTAKER to 'put the body under the earth' on the morning of May 26: as few as possible were to know the actual location. Naked again, the crudely sutured corpse was wrapped in blankets and camouflage netting, bound at its neck, waist, and ankles with field-telephone wire, and carried by truck out

into the Lüneburg heath, to be buried at dead of night amongst the sightless trees by four NCOs, all bound by the Official Secrets Act; rather as common murderers might try to dispose of their victim.

There was neither a religious ceremony nor flowers nor mourners; not then and not later. Whittaker determined the map coordinates of the makeshift grave, noted them on a sheet of paper, and entrusted it to Col. Murphy at Second Army headquarters.

A year later, on June 22, 1946, Whittaker returned to this desolate site with a party of officers, satisfied himself that the grave was undisturbed, and took more precise measurements on the coordinates. He and Sergeant-Major Austin, both members of the Intelligence Corps, were afterwards rewarded with the MBE. Notably, the FSS history is careful to stress that no members of 45 Field Security Section itself were present 'when Himmler killed himself'.

Rotting, blanketed, and lifeless, his remains would cruise the underworld, trapped beneath that deserted heath. Heinrich Himmler, once the second most powerful man in Hitler's Germany, had become a map-reference, a tiny cross-hair on the vasty globe. He was now just a string of numbers. In any other circumstance, the pedantic, the meticulous, the punctilious in him would have appreciated that.

THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO SEE no reason to lament Himmler's passing. Indeed, few tears were shed for him in Whitehall or Pennsylvania Avenue. Guy Liddell of MI5, the nemesis of so many of Himmler's espionage agents, recorded in his private diary that the news had come through that Himmler had committed suicide 'under circumstances which are perhaps excusable and even desirable.' The 'suicide,' he concluded, would save everybody much trouble.

We are however writing his biography, and it has been proper to re-examine his death with no less caution than the life which had preceded it. He was a crucial witness to the rise and fall of the National Socialist Party and a participant in Hitler's War; he had created the Waffen-SS, the most formidable fighting elite Europe has ever seen, and an industrial empire based on forced labour, and he had administered much of what would after 1970 be fêted as 'The Holocaust'. There was every reason why this prisoner's life should

have been preserved long enough to bear witness and stand trial; and yet it seems he was put to death by his captors in one way or another in that room in Lüneberg. It is surprising that there were no disciplinary proceedings resulting from the 'suicide' of such an important prisoner, who had voluntarily surrendered, in British hands. (In the U.S. occupation zone, after Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring demonstrably took his life by poison, a formal court of inquiry resulted.)

Let us rewind to the moment when Himmler shambled into that room, clutching the ill-fitting British army trousers which had been given him to wear. Did he hear, rising all around him, the celestial voices of his victims, chanting softly as he entered: '*Here he comes. Here he comes*'? If he did, he may well have winced and echoed: Here I come? *I can't take my life – I don't have the thing with me any more.* They took it off me.

That was just it. He had no poison capsule. Indeed he had not planned suicide. He had been apprehended by two Russian soldiers, turned over to the British, and taken to that camp at Barnstedt – perhaps that selfsame day, perhaps a day or two earlier: the army's records are unsure even as to the date. An American army Intelligence officer learned that Himmler had told the first British interrogators, after he identified himself, that he wanted to offer to mobilise SS divisions to help the British fight off a Russian attack on the Second Army which he believed was imminent.

That does not sound like a suicidal intent.

His captors had taken his clothes and possessions from him – his little case, a false eye-patch, a tube of Danish shaving cream, his Adler razor blades, a different pair of eye-glasses, and the rest – and distributed them as trophies to the men. He had been repeatedly frisked and searched. From the first moment at Barnstedt they recorded that they had searched him and *found a poison capsule*. 'I handed the phial to you later on in the evening,' reported the chief interrogator Captain Smith to Major Randell, who had come over post-haste from Second Army as soon as Smith phoned him. 'Himmler and the two other men were kept in the room under constant supervision until you arrived with Major Rice.' They phoned Second Army to confirm that

the prisoner was indeed identified as Himmler. Whereupon Colonel Murphy came over from Second Army headquarters in Lüneburg.

Eighteen years later, Captain Thomas Selvester, the commandant of Camp 031 at Barnstedt, would claim to have found – he did not say where – a second brass casing, which had caused him to conduct a closer search of Himmler for a missing phial. Since neither Smith (1945) nor Murphy (1964) makes any mention of this second casing, we may perhaps discount it, unless to speculate why Selvester wrote of it so long after. Besides, until he was escorted to that front room in Lüneburg, Himmler was still expecting to be taken to Montgomery.

Even if he had managed to conceal a second fragile glass phial in his mouth – not easy, given its size – it would be unlikely to have survived the ten mile road journey from Barnstedt to the house in Uelzener Strasse, because he chattered throughout the drive, relates Murphy, and *scoffed British army sandwiches*, according to Whittaker.

SO HOW DID HE DIE, if not by his own hand? We do not know for certain, because the 'autopsy' report, perhaps remarkably for such a document, volunteers no actual cause of death; it does not, for example, record any glass splinters found in the mouth. The squad of NCOs held a drunken victory party after their victim's death. Which may explain why there is no paper trail in the public archives – no instructions from London on how to treat this special prisoner, no questions to be put to him under interrogation – and no directive on his disposal, dead or alive. The tortoiseshell glasses he was wearing when he entered the final room were smashed somehow beyond repair, but still sold at auction in that sorry condition years later.

WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE BRITISH ARMY record of Himmler's last minutes alive has been tampered with; the three-page typescript account in the war diary of Major Whittaker's unit has been doctored (*see overleaf*). The first page relates the arrest of other prisoners including Prützmann, who is also said to have died 'a suicide' there, or in a Belgian fort; the third page describes the disposal of Himmler's remains. The second page has been retyped by a different person using paper from the same pad, a few lines shorter,

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2119. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(*Delete heading not required*).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit.... Second Army Defence Company

Month and Year... May 1945.

Commanding Officer Major N. Whittaker (The Loyal Regiment)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Area SOLTAU	1	0930	OC and No 2 Pl moved with Adv Recce Gp to area LUNEBURG 7819	
" "	3	1100	Coy HQ and No 1 Pl moved with 'A' Shift to area LUNEBURG 7819	
" "	4	0930	Nos 3 and 6 Pls moved with 'B' Shift to area LUNEBURG 7819	
LUNEBURG 7819	15	1830	PRUETZMANN (SS Obergruppenfuhrer and Chief Organiser of 'Werewolf' Movement) taken into custody.	
" "	16	1100	PRUETZMANN taken away under escort.	

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WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(*Delete heading not required*).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit SECOND ARMY DEFENCE COMPANY.

Month and Year May 1945.

Commanding Officer Major N WHITTAKER (The Loyal Regiment).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
LUNEBURG	20	2030	Dr DORPMULLER (Reich Minister for Transport) Dr GANZENMULLER (Secretary of State in Reich Ministry for Tpt) Dr FLESS (Ministerial Director in Reich Ministry for Tpt) taken into custody.	
"	23	1100	Drs DORPMULLER, GANZENMULLER and FLESS taken away under escort.	
"	23	2100	Informed by G I(b) that HEINRICH HIMMLER (Reich Minister of Interior, Chief of German Police, Reichsfuhrer SS, and Head of Home Army) had been detained, and was to be brought to Second Army Defence Company guard room. All arrangements were made for him to be guarded, and Capt C J L Wells (RAMC) was summoned from Rear Army HQ to make the necessary medical search.	
"	23	2245	HIMMLER arrived and was immediately taken to a room in No 31a, LUNEBURGERSTRASSE and Capt Wells commenced the medical search. Poison was suspected and all possible hiding places were searched. When the doctor began to examine HIMMLER'S mouth, he only half-opened his mouth and the doctor demanded that the mouth should be opened wide, and at the same time requested that a light should be shone more closely. The doctor perceived a blue object between HIMMLER'S right lower teeth and gum, and attempted to get it from his mouth, but HIMMLER gave a shake of his head bit the doctors finger and crunched this object, which proved to be a phial of poison between his teeth. He dropped almost immediately to the floor and every effort was made to get the poison from his mouth, including turning the patient upside down with his mouth in a bowl of water. Artificial respiration was attempted but it was of no avail, and HIMMLER died at 2314 hrs. Present in the room at HIMMLER'S death were Col L N MURPHY (Col G(I), Major N WHITTAKER (OC Defence Company), Capt C J L WELLS (RAMC), Medical Officer - Rear Army HQ, and CSM AUSTIN (CSM Defence Company). In the hall of the house at the time were Major K RANDALL (G.2 I(b)) and Major S RIGG (G.2 I(b)).	

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(The Loyal Regt)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
			These two Officers had accompanied Col Murphy with HIMMLER from the Interrogation Centre.	
LUNEBURG	24	1700	Press Conference held by Col Murphy, and the Press were shown HIMMLER'S body.	
"	25	1100	D.D.M.S. arrived with Medical and Dental Officers to take certain measurements, impressions, etc.	
"	26		HIMMLER'S body was buried in an unknown grave without a religious ceremony. Those present at the burial were Major N. Whittaker, CSM Austin E, Sgt Otterey W and Sgt Weston R. These four were the only people who knew the ocation of the grave. Subsequently the Map Reference of the location was handed by OC Defence Company to Col G(I), HQ, Second Army.	
"	26	2000	GERHARDT HIMMLER, HIMMLER'S brother taken into custody.	
"	27	1600	GERHARDT HIMMLER taken away under escort.	
"	29	1815	Mrs. William Joyce (British Traitor) was taken into custody. Guard supplied by D.F. (French women) in addition to normal guard.	
"	29	1715	William Joyce (British Traitor), suffering from wounds, taken into custody at 7th General Hospital.	

MAJ
COMDG. SECOND ARMY DEFENCE C

but using the number 1 throughout, rather than the letter 'l'. True, a seasoned researcher will sometimes notice that lengthy documents are amended, but complete pages are not often *retyped*.

The version given by the doctor, Dr Wells, is also questionable, and changed over the years: why would he have asked Himmler to 'come over to the window?' The time of death was 11:14pm – two hours after sunset; there were no street-lamps, and no light from the stars or moon. The British war-artist shows the window blinds are drawn.

TWO CLUES REMAIN TO MENTION, sinister and unexplained: the same war artist noted professionally not just the colour of the curtains and walls in that room, but details about the dead Himmler's head: 'Speckled forehead and neck; bristling eyebrows; broken nose; shaven, mustache beginning to grow.' The words '*broken nose*,' did the doctors really miss that fact when writing their 'autopsy' report?

When was it broken? It must have occurred in the half-hour between his arrival and demise. The nose would hardly have been broken after the prisoner was dead; and a blow would have broken any phial concealed, as the official version claimed, in his mouth. Further evidence is in the photos taken after death, of the scuffmarks on the polished floor, and the comparison of Himmler's living profile with the mask moulded after death; there are perceptible contusions on the forehead, and what police forensics now term blunt-force trauma. Some photographs also show a white enamel bowl next to the body, with an inch or two of dirty, or perhaps bloody, water.

The second clue is a coffee-table book on Himmler's Gestapo, published years later in Britain; there was a copy on the shelves of Coventry Central Library. The printed caption beneath the final illustration, of Himmler's corpse lying on the floor, reflects the official version – he had swallowed a poison phial concealed in his mouth. The SS chief had 'committed suicide.' It is the standard official story.

But in this library's copy, an unknown hand has written a pained comment in the margin, in ballpoint pen: 'No he didn't. Sergeant-Major —— punched him in the face. I know because I was there.'

The official record of what happened at 31a Uelzener Strasse, Lüneburg, signed by the commanding officer of Second Army Defence Company, Major Norman Whittaker. Page 2 has been retyped by a different hand.
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, *WO171/3969*

2: Flawed

LIKE WATER SPLASHES, the relics of Himmler's life lie splattered around the globe. His household papers and some diaries are in Russia, his childhood epistles to his parents are stolen property in Israel, and his photo albums in Stanford, California – taken illegally by American Red Cross girls billeted in his lakeside villa in Gmund; the scores of letters to his mistress 'Hedwig' are owned by a soldier's son who lived in Chestnut Street, Chicago, where we read them.

Each tells us something about Himmler's character: The Nordic runes he used to sign those letters, the way he counted off the early days of Adolf Hitler's First Silesian War in his 1939 diary, and then gave up as the fighting blazed out of control and extended into infinity, the meticulous way he recorded his weight each morning, the manner in which he wrote a neat caption for each photo in ink using a Gothic script that is all but illegible now to his countrymen.

The relics reveal to us his hero-worship of Adolf Hitler, the Führer – Germany's Saviour, his own Messiah. Yes, his colleagues were inclined to treat Hitler's policeman, Heinrich Himmler, rather like an interesting child – but as a child with both hands on a gun.

His interests were manifold. In early years he set aside time to immerse himself in archeology, in the occult, and the religions of the Far East. For Christmas 1938, he sent over to Hitler a book entitled *Death and Immortality in the World View of Indo-Germanic Thinkers.* He hoped it would mark a high point in the festivities, and signed it personally for his 'Führer.'

Hoping to escape prosecution himself, his colleague Reich minister Albert Speer declared loftily after the coming war that he had not realised what an insignificant person Himmler really was. 'Towards the end I also discovered to my horror that he had abnormal ideas.' Admittedly, Speer claimed, Himmler had had only five or six meetings with him during his time as minister (the records tell a different story) but he had eccentric views – for example, he saw an affinity between Japanese script and Nordic runes. In May 1938 Himmler despatched a year-long expedition to Tibet, headed by German zoologist Ernst Schäfer, to explore the story of a primæval Germanic race which had inhabited that region, and in 1943 charged Schäfer to breed a strain of winter-proof Mongolian horse. He had teams of archeologists scouring Europe to find proof of Germanic *Kultur* – a '*Phantast* on an exceptional scale,' was how Speer dismissed the Reichsführer just a few days after the murder in Lüneburg.

As Speer pointed out, Himmler had not belonged to the exalted circle around Hitler of which he himself was part. 'It is still a mystery to me,' he testified, 'how this man could obtain and hold such power. He will forever remain an enigmatic figure.'

HIMMLER HAD A LIVELY mind. He established farms where experiments could be conducted, for example, on rubber latex extracted from the kok-sagys plant found in Russia. When one Karl Malchus came to him in 1937 with plans for extracting Gold from mud which happened, handily, to come from Munich's local river, the Isar, Himmler provided funding from his secret account. Earlier he had been hoodwinked by a man who told him that he could also make petrol from water. 'Himmler,' scoffed Joseph Goebbels in his diary on January 27, 1935, 'has fallen for a Gold and petrol maker, [Heinrich] Kurschildgen. He tried to defraud me too. I saw through him at once.' Hitler amused his dinner guests with tales of this trickster.

Disillusioned, Himmler sent the man to a concentration camp. In August 1944, as Paris fell to the enemy, Himmler was instructing SS *Obergruppenführer* Carl Oberg to evacuate the inventor of a 'beams apparatus,' a *Strahlgerät*: 'This must be done without question.'

Unaware that he was being overheard by hidden microphones, Karl

Wolff would say of Himmler in mid-May 1945: 'He pilfered everybody's best ideas and plans. He took some of [Alfred] Rosenberg's ideas for instance. He picked the best out of everybody's work. In the early days he led us with consummate skill, he preached beautiful, good, and noble ideals. . . for that reason the hearts and mental and physical strength (and the willingness to fight) of his men belonged to him. Later on it was all too much trouble for him.' Until almost the end Himmler enjoyed the immense goodwill of his officers and men.

His war's-end disappearance and the British story of his 'suicide' destroyed that. Dr Karl Brandt, Hitler's surgeon, admitted that he had found him to be 'clever, determined, simple in his tastes and basically good'; but now that he read in newspapers of Himmler's apparent suicide he saw it as a sure sign of a troubled conscience.

HIMMLER'S OLDER AND LESS FAMOUS BROTHER took a more balanced view: a competent pianist and water-colourist, Gebhard was a willing talker and made no secret that he was still proud of the family name. He was visibly still fond of 'Heini' when we met him and his wife Mathilde in the 1970s, and he deprecated him only in a mild, mocking way – he was 'far too much of a coward' to have acted without Hitler's orders, said Gebhard. Heini had often lamented to him about the 'policeman's lot' not being a happy one; he had to deal with the underside of society.

Heinrich Himmler's widow Marga took much the same line when an American journalist lazily asked if she knew how much the world hated his name. She nodded, but pointed out that before the war an equal number had held him in high esteem. 'Perhaps,' she ventured, with a cold shrug, 'it is the destiny of all policemen to have heaped on them the obloquy of many: and my husband was a policeman.'

AFTER THE NEW WORLD WAR was over, SS-*Obergruppenführer* (General) Maximilian von Herff – another of his more cerebral generals – kept a very private diary, which his family made available to us. As Himmler's Waffen-SS began its historic expansion to a million men, Herff had been co-opted from Erwin Rommel's army to run the SS personnel office. Taken into British custody at Mürwick

on May 9, 1945, shortly after Himmler went to ground, Herff too expressed feelings of betrayal, exclaiming that 'by killing himself' – as the British had claimed – Himmler had 'deserted' his officers in their hour of need. Herff too died in unexplained circumstances.

In his diary pages Herff allowed this bitterness full rein: 'Even in March the German people still hoped for so much from Himmler – that he would persuade the Führer to act at the last moment. But he was a failure, and he ended up being disloyal both to the Führer and to the Waffen-SS. He had mercilessly demanded the very utmost from thousands of Waffen-SS men, but in the hour of defeat he did not place himself between his troops and the enemy. . . From us he demanded loyalty to the very end. . . With the Lord however you cannot trifle; and ultimately there is no crime on earth that goes unpunished.

'The destruction of the Jews was our misfortune. Here real men should have cried halt. . . The biggest criminal was the Reichsführer; he is guilty of the worst crime of all time, thanks to his completely misplaced sense of loyalty. The Party is equally guilty for allowing this madness to go on. Revenge begets revenge, and bloodshed leads only to more bloodshed. Now it's all over for Germany.'

Three days before Himmler's death, they showed Herff the photos. 'Now I can understand their hatred for us,' he wrote, retiring to his room. 'Criminals and demented hangmen's tools from the concentration camps have dishonoured the Waffen-SS, and now hundreds of thousands will have to pay for this.' 'I feel no personal guilt,' he recorded piously on Whit Monday, May 21: 'I just did my duty as chief of personnel for the Waffen-SS.' He added: 'What happens now is the terrible legacy of the Reichsführer, and he is a deserter.'

On the last day of Himmler's life, the hidden microphones heard Herff commiserating with Udo von Woyrsch. 'We just don't understand the Reichsführer,' they decided. Woyrsch had first met Himmler fifteen years before, and run the SS in Silesia; his father had been a royal flunky, a *Kammerherr*, in Imperial Berlin.

In far-away Lüneburg, Himmler was meeting his Maker. Learning of Himmler's end, Herff showed no pity: 'Thus the Reichsführer does his final disservice, even in death – betrays his Waffen-SS men

instead of standing up for them. He broke faith with us, while he demanded absolute loyalty of the SS. How we have been let down! God avenges all evil.' 'I can't understand why Himmler committed suicide,' Woyrsch was overheard to say. 'He could always have maintained that the Führer had ordered the strict measures and that he had pledged himself to complete obedience.' 'I am still trying,' recorded Herff on May 27, 'to form a picture of Himmler, and I have to accept with dismay that I never really knew him. He was always a stranger to me.'

The British lies about Himmler, and his unseemly end, would outlast many who believed them. We shall find a different picture of both Herff and Himmler emerging from the pages which follow.

BEFORE THE GRIM FINAL ACT in Lüneburg, Himmler's standing among his countrymen had been high. SS *Standartenführer* (Colonel) Hans Lingner, commander of the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division 'Götz von Berlichingen,' was heard to remark months before the end in 1945: 'It is generally said that Himmler is hated by the people. But that isn't the case at all.' He had heard of a speech Himmler once made with great applause to armament workers. 'Afterwards even the most plain-spoken fellows went up and asked him to shake hands with them, it really came straight from their hearts. He'd be the right man for post-war. I believe, too, that he'd be able to make the change-over. He would be able to see that everything has gone to the devil anyway, that our first duty now is to maintain the bare existence of the people. . . But, of course, it's quite impossible for the Allies to approve of anything like that. They will *undoubtedly* cut off their nose to spite their face.'

The Waffen-SS adored Himmler, while the rival services usually did not. An army general stated in captivity in 1944: 'I hate him like anything,' but admitted that he had met him only once: 'The remarkable thing is that I don't know anyone who knows Himmler personally and who is *not* enthusiastic about him.'

Sentenced to death at Nuremberg, Field-Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, chief of the German High Command, spoke bitterly of the 'amoral' Himmler. 'He was a selfish man, who knew no inhibitions. He

advanced across corpses, impelled by his own hunger for power. He stopped at nothing. He was stupid and vain, devoid of ethical and moral compunctions.' All the evidence and testimony of the last RSHA chief, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, recalled Keitel, showed Himmler to be the *spiritus rector* behind the lawless and mediæval methods used. 'Just look at his speech in Posen' – in October 1943, about which we shall hear much more. 'The Jews are lice, they have to be stamped out, squashed, trampled to death.'

AS HIMMLER EMERGED FROM THE DARKNESS surrounding Hitler's rise to power, foreign diplomats found they knew little about him. Was he a moderate, or a political extremist, a man cast in the mould of a future Maximilien Robespierre, as their embassy in Berlin suggested? What were his real views on the Jews, his involvement in the notorious 'Night of Broken Glass' in November 1938: Carl Jacob Burckhardt remarked at the League of Nations to Roger Makins, Britain's man in Geneva, a few weeks later that Himmler was 'disgusted by the anti-Semitic outrages.' Makins learned that Hitler too was 'not pleased' by the *Kristallnacht*. 'Himmler's present attitude remains uncertain,' wrote Frank Roberts, of the Central Department at Britain's Foreign office. 'It would be useful,' agreed a colleague, Sir Orme 'Moley' Sargent, 'if we could know more about Himmler's character & religion.' Ivone Kirkpatrick obliged: 'Efforts have been made to make him come clean, but I think they failed. He is quiet, mole-like in his activities, ambitious, able, & possessed of great physical courage. But as he sees few people & is not talkative he is a dark horse. The Italians think a lot of him & cultivate him.'

Himmler's chief of staff Karl Wolff would say years later that he had become harder only as the Second World War progressed. He was an amiable human being who became what he was only as a result of the war's rising climate of barbarism and brutality, said Wolff. His concern for his men was genuine, but carefully calculated. He knew how to ingratiate by a display of compassion and understanding.

His differences with Richard Walther Darré, the ideologue ('Blood and Soil') and minister of agriculture were well known, so it was easy for Reichsführer Himmler to clap Darré's disgruntled state-secretary

Herbert Backe on the shoulder and show him sympathy. He invited him to his villa in Bavaria at the beginning of September 1936, and spent hours lecturing Backe, four years his senior, on the need for Party unity. Here is Backe's account, written to his wife Ursula: 'Again and again I am struck by the Reichsführer's comradely spirit and the way he elevates everything from the personal to the grand level. He does not minimise or evade an issue, he identifies the real root of the matter, and demands that we heed that. I had to go out shooting alone on the first day and I bagged a deer. In the evening we had a chin-wag over a friendly game of cards. He asked about my differences with D. [Darré] only the next day and said I could speak my mind freely. I told him that I had no personal ambitions or axe to grind . . . that I would die before seeing everything I had fought for as a National Socialist sacrificed.' Backe too 'committed suicide'.

Backe named names but Himmler gave the impression of knowing much of this already, and he warned against one man, Moritz, 'who he believes is a Jew.' Himmler adopted what was to become a familiar ploy. He invited Backe to come to him directly with all such worries in future. 'The RF interrupted me to insist that after my *Kur* [health cure] down here I should take fourteen days' convalescent leave, as he had once had a bad experience with [Kurt] Daluege [chief of Germany's *Ordnungspolizei*, the regular police] because he returned to work immediately after a *Kur*. He [Himmler] demanded that I set aside all the unimportant jobs to stay fit. Finally he asked whether I could pay for the *Kur* myself, otherwise he would take care of that. I said I had the means and I'd even declined the 500 mark bonus offered by the Führer.'

Himmler's warmth and solicitude were not lost on Herbert Backe. With evident acerbity he pointed out to his wife, 'When did it ever occur to D. [Darré] to ask if I could manage, and whether he could help me? . . . A leader must take care of his juniors. That's the difference.' 'The RF told me he would see to it that the other subordinates come here after my *Kur* is completed, and that we thrash everything out in detail. I agreed.' 'Was I right?' he asked his wife. 'When I drove over there I was determined not to adopt half-measures – no sham reconciliation. Now I have done just that, influenced by what the

Reichsführer said about the need for unity.'

AS A CHILD Heinrich Himmler had been frail and studious. As a man now he stalked up and down when thinking, his hands clasped behind his back, his right shoulder slightly ahead. His face looked innocent; he was permanently bespectacled – not the heavy tortoiseshell glasses that are seen perched on his face in death, but thin metal-rimmed glasses, even a pince-nez. The eyes behind them seemed small and close together, giving him a rodent look. His upper lip in young manhood was adorned with a wispy toothbrush moustache, for which we shall later learn there was a purpose.

His face was every caricaturist's nightmare – it was fleshy, featureless. 'He had a pale, round, expressionless face, almost Mongolian, and a completely inoffensive air,' said Ernst 'Putzi' Hanfstaengl, one of Hitler's earliest associates, after meeting Himmler. Himmler hoped to generate an easy-going, Bavarian-*gemütlich*, appearance. One writer believed that when Himmler spoke, his eyes searched the other's face and fixed him with a penetrating gleam; but another wrote with equal force, 'His eyes are colourless, his gaze is sleepy, and he does not look people in the eye.'

In plain clothes, he was outwardly unassuming, wore a soft felt hat, was of average height, and his adiposity was becoming mildly troublesome. In private he spoke with a Bavarian dialect. He called his staff his *Kinder*, his children. Paratroop general Hermann-Bernhard Ramcke, who saw him in the tea room at Hitler's East Prussian headquarters, at the end of 1942, recalled: 'He came over to me . . . and he appeared quite different [from what I had expected], a very mediocre, harmless little man.' Unlike the other brasshats (for example Hermann Göring or Field-Marshal Erhard Milch of the Luftwaffe, Albert Speer, or the army's Colonel-General Friedrich Fromm, or even SS *boulevardiers* like Otto Skorzeny), he was never seen at gourmet restaurants like the leather-walled Horcher's in Berlin. General Fritz Baron von Broich, commander of the 10th Panzer Division, told a fellow prisoner soon after his capture in 1943 that Reinhard Heydrich had the better brain, while the Reichsführer seemed more 'insignificant.' 'I once sat next to him at the Olympic

Games in Garmisch – a long time ago. He sat with us after dinner.' There was little he could add to that, other than to say: 'He has always adroitly kept in the background.'

There was one aspect on which all the sources agree. Himmler acquired no personal wealth. Even army officers admitted that he was incorruptible, and stood out from others in that respect. 'He is the only man about whom you don't hear anything bad,' Major-General Bock von Wülfingen was heard admitting, to nods of approval from his fellow generals late in 1944. 'He has neither lived in luxury, nor in great style.' Himmler regarded financial wrong-doers as the worst, and punished them 'mercilessly' (as his bodyguard Josef Kiermaier put it). 'Money spoils the character,' he was heard to scoff. It was a paradox that Himmler, whose OPERATION REINHARDT from 1942 to 1943 would involve robbery on an unparalleled scale, should display anger at the petty thieving of others.

HE NEVER RECOGNISED THE DUAL STANDARDS. There existed a secret fund, to which certain captains of industry who called themselves his Circle of Friends, contributed. It was managed by SS *Brigade–führer* Fritz Kranefuss; Kranefuss had learned accountancy in a Jewish banking house in Hanover and put his expertise to good use. In return – thanks to his friendship with Oswald Pohl, Himmler's economics guru, and with Karl Wolff too – Kranefuss benefited from Himmler's cover for his own financial dealings. Otto Ohlendorf, head of Himmler's powerful domestic Intelligence Division, *Amt III*, described Kranefuss as 'an evil character,' and the Circle's main activity as being 'to dine with Himmler once a month and contribute money to Party funds.'

Such opacity is not unusual with lodges, secret services, or the major political parties in the democracies. The Circle was akin to political action committees in the U.S.A. It did not escape the industrialists that Ohlendorf spent much effort investigating their structures and stripping off their camouflage: so Heinrich Bütefisch of I.G. Farben, the chemical combine, was careful to contribute, as did the young Cologne banker, Baron Kurt von Schröder. It was to this Circle, and to Wolff, that Himmler took his financial needs – to buy books, or

support the Allach porcellain factory, or fund his *Ahnenerbe* foundation. Wolff drew sixty percent of the annual total of two million Reichsmarks from the Circle, and the rest from Martin Bormann's funds or the Adolf Hitler Fund, which came in turn from postage stamp royalties and the sales of *Mein Kampf*. The larger donations came from Friedrich Flick, Otto Steinbrinck, and the rest.

After his appointment as minister of the interior in August 1943, a number of these men sent to Himmler a cheque for over a million marks for the fund 'at your disposal, for special purposes.' They included merchant bankers, and the bosses of Siemens, I.G. Farben, and steelworks and coalmines. The chief of Himmler's *Amt VI* division, foreign Intelligence, Walter Schellenberg, admitted that he never fathomed the real reason for the Circle, except that these business men 'were not moved by conviction but by pure calculation' – a short-cut to Himmler and a measure of immunity from police action. There was an element of Danegeld. The signatories hoped for immunity from prosecution, or at least a sympathetic hearing if they fell foul of the law. Kranefuss destroyed all the Circle's files at the end and took his own life to preserve their confidentiality.

Himmler had bought a small lakeside villa at Gmund after the National Socialists came to power, on the shores of the Tegernsee lake in Bavaria; it cost around 65,000 Reichsmarks, not an impossibly large sum, but his income was only modest and it took him six years to clear the debt. Visiting him in 1938, his *Ordonnanzoffizier* Diether Lönholdt found the villa set some way back from the road, on the southern exit from Gmund; it was a two-storey building, with Himmler's office on the ground floor. Josef Kiermaier, the police bodyguard who joined his staff in June 1934, often saw him there – usually in the summer or at Christmas. 'Staying down at Gmund the Reichsführer lived with his wife and daughter, whom he adored,' recalled Kiermaier. The Himmlers were popular with their neighbours: 'His modesty and simplicity in dealing with the locals helped him gain their respect.'

Mathilde Himmler, the wife of Heini's older brother Gebhard, described to us how after 1945 she was assigned to the home of Lieutenant-General Walter Warlimont at Tegernsee: hoping to curry

favour with the enemy, Frau Warlimont succeeded in ousting this Himmler woman; when Frau Warlimont was herself dispossessed soon after, she found every face in Tegernsee turned against her. These are the details that do not always make it into biographies.

WITH MANY MONTHS of the brutal world war still left to run, the German officers who had hung around outside the 1944 Bomb Plot against Hitler wondered what Himmler would have done with them: 'He will bump off all those from our military circles whom he has left alone up till now,' said Rear-Admiral Hans-Udo von Tresckow (who had been Naval Commandant, Seine–Somme).

'Not according to those who know him,' Major-General Carl Wahle corrected him; and the now suitably 'anti-Nazi' Lieutenant-General Seyffardt recalled that his friend, the wealthy industrialist Alfred Ludwig, had one evening told Himmler to his face that he was a 'black arsehole' (referring to the colour of the SS uniform); but the Reichsführer had merely laughed. 'Ludwig's wife said he was a very charming, pleasant person, and it was not true to say that he was a murderer. The Führer's headquarters swears by Himmler, too.'

'I consider him entirely above board,' continued General Wülfingen. 'I think he is quite straight.' Major-General Wahle was inclined to give the Reichsführer the benefit of the doubt: 'His reason for being so ruthless is roughly this: he says that if one did not permit him [Himmler] to carry out his business it would be like not allowing a judge to sentence a man who had committed murder for robbery. That's roughly what he said.' (The microphones could not pick up every word, but the sense seems plain enough.)

Admiral Tresckow pointed out that it was the lack of checks and balances on Himmler's power that made him such a danger, and it is hard to argue with that view.

HIMMLER EXPECTED the utmost physical fitness of his men, but he also demanded the same of himself, although twenty years of desk work had not prospered his muscle-tone or figure. He did not tolerate the long-winded and verbose. Some said he was no orator, but we beg to disagree. He wrote brief notes, and spoke otherwise *ex tempore*.

There was something of the Puritan in him. His meals were fast, wolfed down in ten minutes to leave more time for talk and work. His only luxury was one or two cups of real coffee and a cigar or two, particularly when he had guests, but he never smoked before midday. He would smoke a second cigar with the afternoon coffee, and a third after dinner, but limited himself pedantically to three. With his obsequious and customary politeness Adolf Eichmann would later tell an interrogator: 'A small illustration which Herr *Hauptmann* [Captain Lees, the Israeli interrogator] might consider so unimportant as to be hardly worth mentioning – when someone was sent for by Himmler and happened to be a smoker, he would first go to the toilet in the special train to use the pummy-stone and lemon always available there. If there were the smallest traces of yellow nicotine stains on ones nails, Himmler would notice and might well take ones hand, stare at the stains and say "three months smoking ban" or maybe "six months' smoking ban" and that was an order, and that was that.'

His guests might drink one or two glasses of wine or beer, but if they helped themselves to a third it was noted – alcoholism was one particular *bête-noire*. He was never seen drunk, until the last weeks of military disaster, and he never drank alcohol before noon. To Robert Ley, powerful head of the German Labour Front, the organised labour movement, he offered brotherly assistance. 'Dr Ley drank to excess after Godesberg,' recalled an army captain, referring to the 1938 high-level Anglo-German conference. 'That was when he starting putting the drinks away. Himmler always had a couple of SS gents there in plain clothes who'd come in on the dot of eleven and sidle over to Ley's table. "It's that time, Herr Doktor," they'd say, and Ley would get up and go up to his room without a murmur.'

Very early on in the Party's rule Himmler started locking up for their own good those who drank too heavily. One was Toni Lehner, of Munich, who had once been close to Hitler – his high Party pedigree was evidenced by a membership number in the low twenties. As a cure for alcoholism Hitler had ordered him committed to the concentration camp at Dachau. 'The punishment was not ordered by the Führer to hurt you,' Himmler wrote him on May 18, 1937, 'but to retrieve you from a path to ruin.' The man soon fell off the wagon, and

Himmler consigned him to the more fearsome camps at Oranienburg and at Buchenwald. 'And he always got on Himmler's nerves,' recalled a fellow prisoner. '[At Buchenwald] he was immediately made controller. He and [Artur] Rödl were like true comrades. . . He ran around with his rifle all day long, but he only went for the Jews, he didn't do anything to us Germans. He was always drunk, he was with Rödl, and the two of them sat boozing in the camp.'

IN PEACETIME BERLIN, HIMMLER'S ROUTINE had hardened. He was at his desk at ten, and his adjutant began showing in visitors – a late visitor would find his appointment cancelled – not just postponed. At two p.m. he and his circle ate in the canteen, a simple repast after which he worked on until eight p.m.; after supper he carried on until one or two in the morning. He recorded his punishing routine remorselessly in his diary, and once even repeated it to his mistress. 'He's a glutton for work,' grumbled an army major, 'and expects the same from others. They don't have any private life.' Asked where Himmler lived, the major revealed: 'In Berlin, only he's always rushing around elsewhere, he is totally driven, he works almost more than the Führer.' (The awed *almost* is to be remarked upon.)

The major recounted with a grim laugh how he had one very good friend, an *Obersturmführer*, who was the second or third *Ordonnanz–offizier* on Himmler's staff ('who's now also been killed in action'); he called on him once when the Reichsführer was nearby, and revealed that he had had a marvellous apartment in Berlin, with a gramophone and all the latest gadgets to relax, for nine months now and hadn't yet had time to play a single record. 'As *Ordonnanzoffizier* he was at work writing until about four o'clock in the morning, and at six he had to be up again, because old Heinrich was already back at his desk with the bit between his teeth and hanging around for him. His nerves were totally in shreds. The Old Man demanded everything. If an SS officer did more than fifty miles an hour on the road – that was the top speed laid down by him – he was sent to a concentration camp.'

On May 28, 1941, an SS *Standartenführer* excused a ticket by pleading that a colonel told him to step on the gas. 'I expect you in future,' replied Himmler, 'to adhere remorselessly to the speed

laid down by the Führer.' 'In private,' reflected a lieutenant-colonel captured in 1944, 'Himmler is the pleasantest of the lot, and the only one who doesn't put anything in his own pocket. Whereas the head of the SA [Viktor Lutze], was quite a poor devil in his time – at first he had a medium-sized villa at [Berlin-]Dahlem, and then suddenly he had a large villa. Lutze had a [fatal] car accident on his way back from a black-market food-scrounging expedition. His daughter was driving, as far as I know, and they were very drunk. Then they had a smash … on the arterial road between Wannsee and Zehlendorf.'

SS *Oberführer* Kurt Meyer said in 1944 that if any Party leader got a speeding ticket it was reported directly to the Reichsführer on principle. 'Himmler himself deals with every road accident, every shooting affray, every case of drunkenness, every affair to do with women.' 'One thing is certain,' Meyer was heard remarking to General Curt Eberding. 'That man really works from morning till night. The last time I met him was in March [1944], after he had inspected my Division. Himmler worked until four that morning; the following morning he spoke to a Regiment, and in the afternoon he lectured the officer corps of all the garrisons in the neighbourhood; he left in the evening in order to reach Cologne while it was still dark.'

That kind of thing could only impress. Replied Eberding: 'Many an army general stood about all day doing nothing at all.'

'Foreign countries,' said Meyer, with a trace of pride in his voice, 'have realised that Himmler is top dog in the Reich. Göring is just a child.' Kurt Meyer is now seen as one of the finest division commanders that Germany produced; when he died in 1961 fifteen thousand people attended his funeral in Hagen.

BARELY NOTICED AMONGST HIS MAJOR SINS, Himmler had a minor flaw. He displayed not even a passing interest in the arts. Risking disfavour at the highest level, he made no secret of his view that two hours could be spent more profitably than in the concert hall or theatre. This did not escape Hitler's notice, and in 1945 he dismissed Himmler's ambitions with one crushing remark: He is totally *unmusikalisch* – unmusical (or perhaps, 'tone-deaf'). Albert Speer shared this judgment, saying, 'He was unable to appreciate art.'

As a full-grown man, Himmler did have some friends – they came to visit, went hunting with him, or succumbed to his passion for fishing. His family albums have pictures of punting parties on their local lake – Himmler clad in felt hat and *Lederhosen*; Himmler seated on a flower-decked meadow at a picnic surrounded by family and friends, days before the ruinous attack on the Soviet Union. Shown the caricatures appearing in enemy propaganda, of Himmler the hangman, he just chuckled. He was never bad-tempered or irascible; on the contrary, snapshots invariably show him laughing or with a rollicking, jovial grin spreading across his face.

In fact he was not devoid of a certain grim sense of humour. At the end of November 1940, he joined a shooting Party in the Sudetenland, including Alexis Aminoff of the Swedish foreign ministry. On the first day, as they set out from Berlin in the customary large limousines, he stressed to Aminoff, seated next to him, the common Nordic bonds linking Germans and Swedes, and the many successful intermarriages including that of Göring for example. Unaware of Himmler's identity, Aminoff countered that the Swedish press was free, and not in the grip of a secret police, whereupon Himmler identified himself with that jovial grin. The Swede weaseled his way out – he found this hard to believe, surely the real Himmler was always attended by a large bodyguard? 'Inside Germany,' the Reichsführer assured him, 'I have no need of any bodyguard.'

The Party proceeded to wreak due slaughter on some three hundred cock pheasants on an estate formerly belonging to Archduke Frederick of Austria, and then at a shoot near Magdeburg, where one hundred boar(s) and sixty deer were no less sportingly put to death.

BY THE TIME war broke out in 1939, Himmler's family life would have shrivelled to a shell; he remained close to his daughter Gudrun, but the relationship with his wife had cooled. Since 1938 at least, he had been exchanging letters regularly with a young woman about whom we shall learn more. This was the more noticeable because he had seemed to be the archetypal family man. Laying down rules in 1934, he had decreed that while the SS reservist would normally do duty two days a week, 'married reservists of that age-group are to be left

with Saturdays and Sundays free to look after their families.'

The impression which the wartime German people had of him was of a hardworking officer, a man of simplicity and honesty. A trained sharpshooter stated that Himmler was 'particularly interested in this form of warfare,' namely sniping, and had drawn up a scale of rewards based on the body-count: 100 cigarettes for ten, twenty days' leave for twenty, the Iron Cross First Class and a wrist watch for fifty; an inscribed hunting gun for one hundred; and an invitation to his private game reserve for 150. 'Last year at Rastenburg,' described the same officer, 'he went to one Company's Christmas Party and he gave them books and watches.' Neither he nor his listeners bothered much about where the watches came from.

YES, THE MAN CALLED the most prolific murderer in history was also a kindly man in his way. On most Christmas Eves when he was in Bavaria, he would call at three p.m. on Thilde, their family's old retainer, in Sendling on the outskirts of Munich. Until the very end he kept that up, because for twenty-one years she had brought up the three Himmler boys and counted as family. He took her a hamper which he had packed with cakes, pastries, coffee, chocolate, wine, and sausage, and tucked an envelope with cash inside. He would spend an hour upstairs reminiscing about earlier times, and came down contented after wallowing in childhood memories again.

His chief of staff Karl Wolff would say: 'Himmler had two faces. He could be a kindly paterfamilias, a perfect boss, and a real comrade; but at the same time a man possessed, an eccentric dreamer, and helpless in the hands of Hitler, to whom he was bound increasingly by the ties of love and hatred.'

3: *A Witch in the Family*

Why do people write diaries? The best diaries are those compiled sporadically, like those of Walther Hewel or Anthony Eden and only when events occur; but time is usually at a premium at such moments – diary entries shrink just when they become most important.

Small boys in Germany, it might be added, do not usually keep diaries; they leave that to girls, who confide their secrets to such books, often secured by a tiny padlock for confidentiality. Heinrich Himmler's diaries are those of a lonely soul, writing compulsively, almost as a personal discipline, with the mechanical regularity of a clock's escapement: tick, tock. They are not substantial, like those of the later minister of propaganda Dr Joseph Goebbels; and yet they are worth considering for occasional foretastes of what we may call Himmler's life and crimes.

Much depends on how such diaries are written. Almost worthless are those that are written years after the event, in absentia, or by sisters for their brothers – like the 'diaries' published by Himmler's masseur Felix Kersten, which have led so many biographers astray. A typewritten diary may be revealing – for instance that of Guy Liddell, wartime head of a section of MI5. Perhaps the least revealing are those dictated to others: William Lyon Mackenzie King and Henry Stimson spoke into primitive Dictaphones, with some minion transcribing each day's entries. Goebbels too dictated, to a human stenographer; before that, he had been able to write intimate details

in his diaries because they were handwritten, but after July 1941 he dictated them to a flunky, Richard Otte, and the intimacy is lost.

AT HIS FATHER'S COMMAND Heinrich Himmler had started writing a diary as a nine-year old child and, when the time came, he impressed the discipline on his little girl. At thirteen he began again, numbering the 1914 diary portentously with a figure '1' on its front cover; and he continued serial-numbering from that point on. The entries are unimaginative, and reflect no personal opinions, only those of his elders and betters. He filled this notebook for just over a year; for the following years with gaps until August 1, 1919. Number '4' lasts until February 2, 1920; as an indication of approaching maturity it has five tiny snapshots tucked into the back as mementoes, of a girl with flaxen hair arranging flowers in a vase, together with a loose ticket to an ice rink and one for a theatre-seat. The other four early notebooks that survive are from the years 1922 and 1924.

Like most Bavarians, he learned Gabelsberger shorthand at school, and from 1916 stenographic 'outlines' sprinkle some of the pages. The early diaries have been well mined by Werner Angress and Bradley F. Smith, and Smith later based a book on them, *Heinrich Himmler: A 'Nazi' in the Making*, 1900–1926 (Stanford, 1971). We imply no reflection on his scholarship – but we returned to the original diaries and deciphered the script again, and we have occasionally sliced the cake differently. Himmler kept up the habit until the end of his life (the last agenda we have found in the USA is for 1944). Others claim to have found more in Russia.

THE EARLY DIARIES OF HIMMLER'S CHILDHOOD are characterised by obsessive detail, from the time he rose to the time he took a bath, and even entries like 'wrote up diary.' Later, he began entering his weight each morning, and in the war years he mechanically notes each mode of transport as a scribbled icon: a car, a plane, a train. Sometimes, though rarely, the future Reichsführer SS had time to write more expansively.

In August 1939 he dictated a whole page for his secretary Hedwig, perhaps to impress her: it records a late-night war conversation with

Adolf Hitler, who had become the captain of his soul, and would be the final architect of his fate.

WHEN THE END CAME Himmler was in northern Germany. He was taken to that house in Lüneburg and murdered, and his personal papers and some diaries were still in Gmund, where they were looted. (Under the Hague Rules on Land Warfare diaries, as personal property, cannot legally be seized.) His official papers had gone south, and most were found in a salt mine at Hallein. Dr Goebbels had ordered his own diaries photographed for posterity on glass plates (which we first had the privilege of unsealing in Moscow archives nearly fifty years later). Himmler's looted diaries began meanwhile to surface. In 1945 a G.I. obtained six of them 'from the housekeeper'; she told him the others had been destroyed by fire. A senior officer sold them to the Hoover Institution in California in 1957. Several reached the U.S. Document Center in Berlin, including one in which Himmler began recording vacations over the next three or four years, as did several of his journals of the 1930s and 1940s. Others stayed in private hands. In the 1990s we borrowed his 1935 diary from a private collector in Florida. A young Texan autograph hunter acquired the 1939 diary. We turned over copies of both to the ungrateful German Federal Archives.

Himmler's missing 1940 diary appeared on the auction block in Munich in 2006; we were languishing that year in a Vienna prison cell, convicted of 'reviving the Nazi Party' through views expressed sixteen years earlier. The original is now deposited under glass, like a rare poisonous beetle, in the museum of a mediæval castle called Wewelsburg, of which we shall eventually hear more. We know that Professor Michael Wildt worked on Himmler's 1937 diary in Moscow, and we obtained copies of the 1941 and 1942 diaries from the NA and the same archives.

There is one other trove to be mentioned: the papers of Himmler's wife and daughter. Years ago, an Englishman won them at an auction in New York. Chaim Rosenthal, a crooked cultural attaché at the Israeli consulate, offered to the naïve Englishman to convey these to the U.K., but hastened back to Tel Aviv instead. He donated them

to Tel Aviv university. Upon realising that they were twice-stolen property, the Israeli university quiet properly returned them, though to Rosenthal and not their rightful owner.

NOT EVERY CHILD IS BLESSED TO HAVE a school headmaster as a father, although Heinrich Himmler may not have considered it good fortune at the time. Heinrich had been born into such a teacher's family in Munich, just two hundred and eighty days into the Twentieth Century upon which he was to leave such an indelible mark; some of his ill-starred contemporaries including Hans Frank and Martin Bormann were also born in 1900. Prim, authoritarian, and pious, *Oberstudiendirektor* Joseph Gebhard Himmler was thirty-five, and a teacher of languages at one of Munich's more distinguished seats of Classical learning, the Ludwig Gymnasium. (A *Gymnasium* is not unlike an English grammar school.) It was from his father that Heini imbibed the urge to better those around him, but also probably the instinct to purify and cleanse, and the need to tidy and regulate.

Their ancestral line stretched back over the centuries, its nodes and gridlines populated by a motley cast of businessmen, gendarmes, and schoolmasters. Heini's own experts would trace them back to before Charlemagne. One of Heini's female ancestors named Passanquay had been burned at the stake as a witch. Reinhard Heydrich would derive satisfaction from informing him in May 1939 of another unfortunate, Margareth Himbler, of Markelsheim, burned as a witch on Apr 4, 1629 – and one senses all the relish of somebody, possibly with a defective weave of his own, effectively informing an Imperial Wizard that a stroke of tarbrush had been detected in his family.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WOULD BECOME BEWITCHED with his own ancestry. The line went back demonstrably to Georg Himmler, family butcher in Burgbernheim, who had died there in 1722 aged over seventy. The male line had undulated over the generations, from humble and obscure origins to Michael Sigmund Himmler who had died in Ansbach in 1845 as a guards-officer to the local margrave, and then to Heini's paternal grandfather Johann Himmler, a police brigadier who had accompanied the mentally troubled King Otto

of Bavaria to Greece, and died in Lindau im Bodensee in October 1872, and finally his own father, the professor, born in Lindau in 1865. The Himmler family tree, when printed in all its calligraphic splendour, sprawled across a parchment roll some twenty feet wide, and genealogists continued to work on it until the end.

His father had married Anna Maria Auguste Heyder in 1897. He had been teaching Classics at the Royal Wilhelm *Gymnasium* since 1894 and would become headmaster at the respected Wittelsbach school in the heart of Munich. He was tutor to young Prince Heinrich himself. A studio photograph taken in 1906 of the family and their nanny sees him as a bewhiskered gentleman of conservative outlook and solid financial circumstances, showing a manly three-quarter profile; Heini and his older brother Gebhard are wearing sailor suits, and the baby 'Ernstl' is sitting on the nanny's lap.

Having retired at sixty-five with the venerable rank of *Geheimrat*, or privy counsellor, the professor would die on October 29, 1936, before Heini's fame had turned to infamy. His wife, Frau *Geheimrat* Anna, was remembered as a gentle little woman, a churchgoer. 'She could not have hurt a fly,' said one who knew her. They had been living on the second floor of No. 6, Hildegard Strasse, when she produced Heini, their second boy, on October 7, 1900. He weighed 3·7 kilos, about eight pounds, and they named him Heinrich Luitpold Himmler, in honour of Prince Heinrich himself. The proud father wrote to the royal prince expressing the hope that he would come for a glass of champagne to celebrate the new tiny infant, 'on the second day of his sojourn on this earth, weight seven *Pfund* and 200 grams.'

Prince Heinrich consented to become godfather. His father wrote in careful copperplate handwriting: 'My very dear Prince Heinrich! After discussing this with the pastor of St Anna's permit us with humble duty to inform you that the pastor will be conducting the baptism of our little Heinrich on Saturday January 12 at one p.m.' He thanked the prince most humbly, yet again, for having promised the honour and privilege of attending in person and begged to remain, 'in joyous anticipation of this exalted day, my very dear Prince, your grateful servant and subject, Gebhard Himmler,' to which he added the requisite salutation when writing to royalty: 'Permit us also to

prostrate ourselves at the feet of His Royal Majesty.' In those days, invitations did not lack a certain formality, one might say.

A few months later, in March 1901, they moved to a new apartment above a pharmacy in Liebig Strasse, in a genteel area of Munich.

A tall carved statue of Christ stood in the entrance hall – an heirloom left to their mother, and the boys crossed themselves each time before it, just as their parents did. Heini set up an *Ahnen-Zimmer*, an ancestral shrine, where he spent hours studying his ancestors.

'LITTLE HEINRICH' ENTERED THE SCHOOL just around the corner, the Wilhelm *Gymnasium*, founded in 1559. The school's Neo-Renaissance building of red sandstone still stands at Thiersch Strasse on the corner of Munich's main thoroughfare, Maximilian Strasse.

He treated his parents equally with touching kindness until the end of their lives. Aged nine, he entered in that diary on July 22, 1910: 'Took a bath. The thirteenth wedding anniversary of my dear parents.' His father, ranked now a *Geheimer Studienrat*, had moved back to Munich after a two-year stint from 1902 to 1903 at a school in Passau, and for the next decade they lived at No. 86, Amalien Strasse, a four-storeyed apartment block in Munich. Here Heini stayed until he was nearly thirteen. The photos show him already wearing the round eye-glasses which were to become iconic later in his life.

He made many friends at the *Gymnasium*. One was Wolfgang Hallgarten, three months his junior and son of a New York Jew (but raised as a Lutheran). Heini occasionally visited their home; the boys' governess Luise Essert discovered his passion for hot chocolate. It was a wealthy, enlightened household. Thomas Mann and Bruno Walter the conductor were among other guests, and the young physicist Werner Heisenberg played his cello within its walls. 'We knew him from 1910 to 1913,' wrote Hallgarten of Heinrich Himmler, rising rather notably to his defence in the 1950s, 'the years when we were all students at the Royal Wilhelm *Gymnasium* in Munich.' There were about twenty-five boys in that class 1-A in 1910; in Hallgarten's recollection Heini was top of the class (other classmates put him second or third). Heini sat in the front desk of the centre row; he wore a grey suit buttoned to the neck, and pince-nez or gold rimmed

glasses – his eyesight was chronically bad.

While the other boys teased their teacher, *Oberstudiendirektor* Hudaczek, for his Czech origins, Heini liked him and stayed in touch with him for years after. He stayed close to the religious instruction teacher, a Jesuit, and was a star from whom slower pupils had to crib. In short, he was a teacher's pet. On March 12, 1911 the Prince Regent Luitpold turned ninety, and the schoolchildren turned out in whites to stage a pageant on the Theresienwiese, forming the figure '90' at its climax. At Mr Hudaczek's dictate Heini had to recite a poem for Bavaria, while Hallgarten represented the Palatinate, and a Baron von Soden spoke for Franconia. Hallgarten wrote with distaste of the 'royal pages,' the children of aristocrats who attended their school, if not in Heini's actual class. The entry requirement for the *Pagerie* was eight blue-blooded great-grandparents. 'The boy-pages marched each morning from the Maximilianeum, where they were educated, across the Maximilian bridge, to the Wilhelm *Gymnasium* where they joined individual classes.' They wore a uniform of dark trousers, dark-blue tunics buttoned to the neck, and caps. Hallgarten claimed that the school director, *Oberstudienrat* Arnold, disclosed to his parents that these children were shielded from academic failure by secret ordinances from above.

In PT lessons Heinrich Himmler scored badly: he could not chin the horizontal bar. He began to fear gym and the ridicule heaped on him by the bearded teacher Carl Haggenmüller and his slender gym assistant, Beer. Lacking strength, recalled Hallgarten, Heini dangled from the bar until the merciless Haggenmüller hoisted him up, while his classmates squealed with laughter. Haggenmüller also liked to mock the boys like Heini who wore wristwatches – a novelty at that time – and called them *Tee-Bubis*, 'tea-boobies,' for their afternoon-tea habit. What did he intend to be when he grew up, he inquired once of him sarcastically, and Himmler said, a naval officer. To become a Prussian lieutenant in peacetime one had to be of blue blood; in the Imperial navy, it was actual ability that counted. So he concentrated on his swimming, haunted the Royal Bavarian Baths in Kanalstrasse, near the palace, and learned to perform headers better than anybody in the class. Once, recalled Hallgarten, they ran

into Heini's father at the baths, almost nude after a shower, and he introduced his own New-York born father.

'*Studienrat* Himmler,' responded the old man, using the *korrekt* form and bowing – while keeping his towel in place.

Yes, those were happy days for Heini. In the archives is a handwritten invitation sent him by Hallgarten, aged twelve, to a garden Party 'if weather holds fine' at three p.m. one Sunday, May 18. That must have been in 1913. After that, he rather lost sight of him, as Heini's family moved to Landshut. 'I for my part failed to discover the slightest anti-Semitic streak in him', reminisced Hallgarten, referring to those shared childhood years at school. For many years he assumed that the fearsome Himmler that people spoke about was a brother, and not the boy he had known. He remarked to their old pal Wilhelm Friess as late as 1949, 'It must be really tough to have a bandit like that as a brother.' Hallgarten surmised that the political upheaval of 1918, which removed the privileges and monopolies enjoyed by non-Jews until then, had started the hatreds festering.

AN OLDER BROTHER, named Gebhard like their father, had been born toward the end of the century which the world had left behind – on July 29, 1898 to be precise. A third son, little Ernst Hermann Himmler, arrived five years after Heini. He was born two days before Christmas in 1905. 'Ernstl,' as they called him, married Paula during World War Two, and would disappear on its last day, killed in action. Ernst had joined the Volkssturm, Germany's 'Home Guard,' and when the Soviet Army attacked Berlin's Charlottenburg district he went out, rifle in hand, to defend the Radio building with the rest of his staff and was not seen again.

On September 11, 1913, their father was transferred to Landshut, fifty miles north-east of Munich, as deputy headmaster of the local *Gymnasium* (today renamed the Hans-Carossa-*Gymnasium* in honour of a minor German poet). For the next six years his family lived at Dreifaltigkeitsplatz (Trinity Square) on the second floor. Heini and his older brother switched on October 27, 1913 to the Landshut *Gymnasium*. It is said that their father still had only a low opinion of young Heinrich's abilities. A Bavarian general later

maliciously recalled: 'He was always complaining that he should have such a stupid son.' There is no trace at all of this in the surviving family papers. By the time the general spoke, the prejudices against Himmler were already overwhelming.

Here at the Landshut school, he again made many lifetime friends. One was Falk Zipperer, an older boy whom he later took onto his staff as a law historian. Another was Karl Gebhardt, a local boy three years older than himself, from a poor Bavarian family. 'If my parents' house was an extraordinarily liberal, free, quiet one,' recalled Karl, on trial for his life half a century later, 'then the Himmler house was that of a strong orthodox Catholic schoolmaster, whose son was brought up strictly and kept very short of cash.' Karl Gebhardt would accompany Heini throughout his life.

He became an expert on infantile paralysis and operations on the leg muscles, and director of the clinic at Hohenlychen outside Berlin. He was a surgeon with the famous *Leibstandarte* 'Adolf Hitler' division at Rostov-on-Don. Army officers jealously described him as 'one of Himmler's evil geniuses.' Himmler appointed this bespectacled, pot-bellied, round-faced Bavarian as acting President of the German Red Cross a few days before the end – not that it would save him from the enemy hangman's noose. Heinrich Himmler, his school friends learned only too late, was a dangerous man to follow too closely.

AS A BOY, HIMMLER PURSUED the usual hobbies. He had toy soldiers, he kept a small garden and herbarium, he played chess with Falk Zipperer and often lost, he strummed on the piano or harpsichord, and stuck stamps into an album in the evenings with Falk and compared collections. With his brother Gebhard and Falk he played board games like Sword and Shield – with dice and markers representing regiments and divisions. 'I've already lost the first fort and ten million,' he recorded on September 1, 1914. He began working out to improve his physique, though with little visible result.

The Himmlers were a church-going family. They prayed together, and stayed together. His parent's influence remained overbearing. Heinrich was received into the Catholic church on April 1, 1911; he placed in his private papers a printed 'First Communion' certificate

based on a painting of Christ at the Last Supper; he went frequently to Mass and received Holy Communion kneeling at his father's side, he celebrated his own family name-days and those of the Bavarian royal family. When Gebhard fell dangerously ill with pleurisy in 1914, they promised a pilgrimage to Burghausen and a special Mass if he recovered, and they kept their promise. Heini went to church every morning, and mentioned each visit in the diary in case the Lord had not caught sight of this little lamb attending His House. He played the piano several times a week, and recorded that fact too; and each time we read these lines we hear perhaps a faint tick, tock. He would not, as things turned out, live to a great age.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR in August 1914 fired the teenage boy's imagination. Germany declared war on Russia, and on France two days later. He read the latest wires displayed in a local showcase next to St Martin's church in Landshut – the tallest church in Bavaria. These were the buildings that framed his childhood. That summer his parents had taken the boys to vacation in Tittmoning, a deeply Catholic town on Bavaria's very frontier with Austria; it boasted a thirteenth century castle, and each year hosted a mediæval pageant with tournaments and jousting. They returned to Landshut amidst scenes of army mobilisation; Heini watched the other youngsters bound for distant battlefields. 'A few days later, off they went to war, jaunty and cheerful,' he reminisced in 1915. 'How many of them are still alive today?' Their tales of derring-do inspired him. He wrote regular diary notes on the progress of the battles and joined in the displays of patriotism, cursing that he was too young for the call to the colours and scoffing at the local citizenry for their lack of verve.

After reading the latest wires in the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* on August 23, he wrote: 'German Crown Prince's victory north of Metz. Prince Heinrich [Heini's godfather] has written to Papa. He has been slightly wounded in the attack on the French dragoons. Germany's dignified reply to Japan's ultimatum. German [troops] in Ghent. Played piano. . . In the evening stuck stamps in. . . Thilde tells me of a sign she claims to have seen in the sky.'

His diary notes often dwell on the valour of the troops, 'The

Bavarians are said to have fought bravely in the battles yesterday. Our 16th [Infantry Regiment] are said to have done particularly well with the long blade. The whole town is hung with flags. The French and Belgians probably never thought they'd be beaten so quickly. First element of the *Landsturm* (Reserve) has been called up. Namur is under siege, eight thousand Russians captured at Gumbinnen.'

'Studied until ten a.m.' he reported the next day. 'The pursuit of the French by the Bavarian Crown Prince's army is bearing rich fruits. . . Our troops are advancing west of the Meuse on Maubeuge. A British cavalry brigade which turns up there is smashed. That's the way! Hurrah! After lessons I go to one-o'clock Mass then with Falk Zipperer to the Moniberg. His little sister Ina plays with Ernstl in the garden. In the afternoon I first play some piano, then Gebhard, Ernst, and I are invited round to Falk and Ina. We play with the toy steam-engine. Then we have tea with *Frau Präsident* [as Heini over-correctly referred to Falk's mother], who is most charming.' Under German siege the fortress of Maubeuge would hold out for three weeks under heavy artillery bombardment; forty thousand French soldiers were taken prisoner here.

'Today is the king's name-day,' wrote Heini on the twenty-fifth. 'I work in the garden a bit, and then to church. . . Ernst and Mama were at Baroness von Steinling's.' He was very pedantic, and a delight to the ladies of class; he addressed them in his diary pages with all the appropriate styles and conceits, as was quite proper, namely the ranks and titles of their respective husbands – it was *Frau Baronin* this, *Frau Assessor* that, *Frau Professor*, *Frau Doktor* and even *Frau Staatsanwalt* (Public Prosecutor) Kornburger.

'In the evening,' his diary of August 25 continued, 'Papa brings news of the complete capture of Namur and Longwy. I am thrilled!' Then the news darkened. On August 27 he wrote: 'Gebhard's and Papa's name day. But it's not really name-day mood. Over to Meierhofer's [probably Mayrhofer's] and buy flowers.' The news was not good. 'The panicky burghers of Landshut are hanging their heads,' Heini mocked, 'scattering frightful rumours . . . and are terrified of being mashacred [*sic*] by the Cossacks. In Lower Bavaria there are not exactly high spirits amongst those left behind. When mobilisation

was announced, everybody in the Old Town started blubbering.'

Lengthening lists of Bavarian casualties were published. 'Altogether, a lot of Germans have already died in action,' he commented. One regiment had suffered terrible losses, after some medal-hungry Württemberg general had come out of retirement and led it into a ghastly defeat; entire companies had been wiped out. 'Victorious advance by the German army in Belgium,' he wrote on the twenty-eight. 'I go to church and then for a stroll through the town with Falk. Gebhard has gone over to Else Kissenbarth's to play the harmonium.'

His mother went down to the railroad station and met the transports of injured soldiers. Pride mingled with pity in the boy Himmler's heart as he saw the men – and perplexity as locals vented their anger on the captured enemy: 'The station was filled with curious Landshuters who became quite violent as people handed up bread and water to the maimed Frenchmen (surely far worse off than our own casualties, as they are prisoners of war).' He listed in his diary the prisoners taken, and updated the numbers several times a day. After church one day the friends gazed at a captured French side-arm and cartridge in the showcase of a pharmacy in Zweibrückenstrasse.

He would soon be fourteen, and Ernstl eight. 'Russians taken prisoner in East Prussia number ninety thousand, not seventy,' he wrote on September 4 adding now his own comment, or perhaps it was his father's: 'They multiply like vermin.' He spent the evening composing a letter to his grandmother, and entered in his diary: 'This evening Gebhard was allowed to go out with Papa and Mummy to visit the injured, and I was very envious of him.'

We can see from his diary entries that September of 1914, as school resumed for Gebhard, Heini, and Falk Zipperer, how Heini wished he were elsewhere. He began carving a ship. 'School is back. We've got Professor Wurmsee as teacher. . . The Landshuters are so obtuse and fearful that when they heard of our troops retreating at Paris they all did it in their pants' – Heini would prefer euphemisms – 'and their hearts sank. Not much enthusiasm around now, sad to say.'

His father the professor had probably begun discussing the war with him. 'Antwerp surrenders,' Heinrich exalted on October 10,

three days after his fourteenth birthday. 'Hurrah! We free up three army corps and we can surely use them.' With one eye on the wires he went about school, piano lessons, and garden, and attended to his daily devotions too – confession and communion, usually with his father. Thanks to his father's help he could now free-translate passages from the Greek, but Latin and 'the accursed Geometry' still bogged him down. 'Today,' he wrote on October 7, 'there was a military exercise, a *Wehrkraftübung*. I'd so much like to be part of that.' His father took him to a lecture by a Professor Günther, a volunteer in Prussia's earlier war with France in 1870. 'He expressed the view,' noted young Heinrich Himmler, 'that the interior of the earth gets softer and more liquid until it is a gas.'

On September 27 he recorded: 'I work out with dumb-bells every day.' He was becoming a stickler for hygiene too. Once, going for a walk in the woods, he came across a whole swarm of children who were visibly affected by microsporia, a fungous disease of the scalp, and they all 'stupidly enough' shook hands: Heini stared at his right hand, and hurried home to wash and record the *bêtise* in his diary.

HIS FAMILY'S RELIGIOUS fervour seems to have intensified in 1915. Several times they went to hear lengthy sermons, or on outings to famous churches like those at Freising, Neuötting, and Raitenhaslach.

With perhaps greater curiosity Heini and Gebhard had gone to visit old battlefields after school that month, inspecting the trenches and bombproof shelters and barracks being built for prisoners of war – 'they are very fine and with modern fittings, particularly the bathrooms.' A few mornings later the pupils were assembled in the dining room to hear a patriotic harangue by the headmaster, and they sang the national anthem. 'In the morning I did my homework, in the afternoon I played with my soldiers, and then after coffee we went for a walk with Mummy.' His father coached him in Greek before each school test, but Heini's mind was far away. 'It went okay for me with the Greek,' he wrote the next day. 'In Masuria [East Prussia], [General Paul von] Hindenburg has taken another 55,000 prisoners.'

This was not without its effect on the impressionable youngster. How he envied Gebhard when he turned seventeen on July 29 and

signed up for the *Landsturm*, the reserve: 'O, to be out there with the rest of them!' – meaning the fighting front. Instead he stayed behind, teaching Ernstl to swim, and went for walks to more churches and monasteries with his pious mother. Once they climbed up to see the church atop the Marienburg; Heini counted the steps on the way down, to where in 1143 a Cistercian monastery had been founded: 265 steps, he found. He entered the number in his diary.

AS THE WAR'S PACE slowed, his diary entries thinned out. Writing it became a chore. On September 18, 1915 he visited Falk Zipperer, his best friend, and swapped postage stamps – Falk's collection was 'enviable,' he wrote: 'Evening: accounts and wrote up diary.' His father required that he account for every pfennig. He made routine entries about the arts too, but these perhaps only honoured his father's insistence that he practise the piano and go to concerts, because in later life he only rarely played the one or went to the other. 'At half past three we went to the concert,' he entered on February 7, 1915. 'It was very long, but beautiful, particularly fine the playing of the violins' – and one gets the impression of a horse being dragged to the water and pretending to like to drink.

Himmler's twenty-eight page history workbook for September to October 1915, labeled 'History Book for Himmler, Heinrich,' was auctioned in Octobe 2011; every one of 225 written clearly questions is dated (sample: 'In which economic, scientific, and artistic fields did Samarians and Semites excel?') with answers jotted in shorthand in the margins. His surviving diary for 1915 ended soon after. He lost interest, made a few jottings as the new year began, and again in May and mid June 1916, entering things in shorthand. The war bogged down in trench warfare. Gallipoli, the Dardanelles campaign, Jutland, all passed without mention. He blamed himself for neglecting to write.

HEINI'S MORE STODGY OLDER BROTHER GEBHARD had mobilised in Passau in 1917 to the 16th Infantry Regiment as an officer cadet. In 1925 Gebhard would return to teach at their old Munich school as a *Studienrat* and rise through academia to become a professor like

their father, staying there until 1935. Thereafter, with the National Socialists in power, he climbed the ranks of the Party's educational agencies. Like many a schoolteacher, he loved to hold forth: 'The intolerably arrogant "Nazi" immediately reappears,' wrote a British army captain who spoke with him. 'At all other times he is so abjectly subservient as to rival an eastern beggar.'

We can safely lose sight of this older brother: he sought no special favours. 'Gebhard Himmler,' reported his interrogators, 'strenuously insists that . . . he very rarely met him [his brother], and that consequently nothing but purely private family affairs were discussed and even they quite curtly.' A qualified engineer, he would rise to the rank of colonel in the administration, awarded to equate to his civil service rank of *Ministerial-Dirigent* in the ministry of education.

YOUNG HEINI APPLIED for a commission in the navy, we are told, but the navy turned him down, because of his poor eyesight. His stomach was playing up on him. His diary carried several references in 1915 to being unwell, to having 'catarrh' and stomach aches (on the last day of July 1915, he 'had a rather bilious stomach'). These childhood episodes undermine the later experts' theories that his stomach problems were of psychosomatic provenance. A maths exercise book and a homework book from September 1916 titled, '*Geometrie Hausheft* for Himmler Heinrich, 7th grade' survive in American hands, with calculations on pi. His letters and diaries for these years are missing, and we are cast onto memoirs to find out what became of him. Still fascinated by the war news he badgered his father to get him a commission. His father thought a proper education more important; while he completed an application form on June 26, 1917 ('My son Heinrich is eager for a career as an infantry officer'), a few days later he asked the royal household to defer the actual call-up until Heini could matriculate.

So much for influence: as Germany's war fortunes declined, the request was refused. Heini left school on October 8, 1917 and began training as a *Fahnenjunker* with the 11th Bavarian Infantry Regiment 'Von der Tann' in Regensburg. He formally entered military service on January 2, 1918. Still of indifferent physique, he found the training

demanding. He was granted furlough already on January 19, for his mother's fifty-second birthday. He went on an officer-cadet course at Freising during the summer (from June 15 to September 15, 1918), and then on a machine-gunner's course at Bayreuth. The war ended with Germany's defeat. His letters home do not touch upon this disaster – he mentions only that he has had his pocket watch repaired.

He wrote a few more times to his dear Papa on army letter-forms, like this one on December 6, 1918:

> I am okay. Put in for furlough yesterday with my comrades on the course. I am studying History and French pretty hard, and reading Otto Ludwig's *The Maccabaean* [a five-act tragedy about Jewish 'freedom-fighters']. I think I'll come home next Saturday evening, in civvies of course. Hope Gebhard's back by then.

The armies were streaming home to an uncertain future. As the war ended, the rabble rose against the soldiers, the soldiers against their officers, and all against the aristocracy and monarchy. Soldiers' Councils seized power. A few days later Himmler wrote, 'I've spoken with the stationmaster who'll phone me when the 16-ers are coming through,' and then the first hint of politics: 'Tomorrow evening there's a public meeting of the Bavarian People's Party,' a conservative body.

There were rumours about the activities of Officer-Cadet Himmler at this time. Few people were aware, reminisced one officer thirty years later, that Himmler had been a member of a Soldier's Council and torn the epaulettes from officers. Such stories, retailed in the aftermath of a crushing defeat, must be treated with caution.

WITH THE WAR OVER, Heinrich Himmler returned to school at Landshut early in 1919 and remained there until June, one of thirty such pupils allowed to catch up on missed lessons in a six month *Sonderklasse* (Special Class) taught by his father. He was appointed prefect, or *Klassenschreiber*, with the duty of listing each fellow pupil and his attendance record. It was a sign of seniority, and better than nothing; but he lacked the medals and war stories of his brother and older friends, and this remained a sore point for many years.

His godfather Prince Heinrich had been killed in action. In Bavaria the Communists had seized power, overthrown the Wittelsbach monarchy, and established a republic under the Jew Kurt Kamonowsky, better known as Kurt Eisner. Eisner was gunned down on February 21, 1919 and a short-lived Soviet republic took over. Many of Heini's fellow pupils answered the Bavarian government's call to volunteer for the Free Corps to fight the Communists in the weeks that followed. Heinrich came back to Munich in April 1919 with, it is said, a Free Corps unit named after Lauterbach, but there is no hard proof that he did, or did not (in mid-1922 he wrote about having just met an 'old comrade from the Landshut Oberländer Company.')

He began to sport a small toothbrush moustache, and this was no accident. Men who had entered the war with handlebar moustaches had trimmed them to fit the gasmask issued after they came under mustard-gas attack. The toothbrush moustache became the unstated badge of the western front veteran. In later years the controlled press would later suggest that Himmler had seen active service. Of course, he had not, but there is no evidence that he was behind these stories.

An exemplary scholar, according to the sources, Heinrich Himmler formally concluded his school studies with his matriculation certificate, his *Abitur*, but only in 1919 – all these other events having intervened. He applied for a Reichswehr commission, but found that when the army had finally discharged him back on December 18, 1918, with the rank of 'officer-cadet, *Fähnrich* (retired),' it was without papers he needed, and the military form which he completed (in his own handwriting) on June 18, 1919 records this. The Reichswehr rejected him in consequence. Its numbers were limited to one hundred thousand men by the Versailles Treaty on June 28, 1919, and there were more than enough men who were better qualified.

He moved to Munich, where he would start his further education and eventually become involved, much against his will, in politics.

AS FOR HIS FATHER, WE HAVE A FINAL glimpse of this extraordinary pedagogue. By now nicknamed Quince Face by his pupils, because of his jaundiced pallor, he retired with high honours aged sixty-five in 1930. In 1980 the writer Alfred Andersch published a semi-autobi-

ographical novel, *The Father of a Murderer*. It was a fictional account of a school class dominated by a terrifying and sadistic Old Man Himmler, a class ending with Alfred's summary expulsion.

Scores of pupils who had known this real Bavarian 'Mr Chips' rose in defence of their fine old Classics teacher. Otto Gritschneder, who had entered the Wittelsbach in 1924 and sat next to Andersch in Class 3b three years later, recalled that Andersch had failed in Greek, Latin, and Math. And of *Geheimrat* Gebhard Himmler this pupil, later a famous trial lawyer, recalled: 'That was one pious gentleman. It's not his fault that young Heinrich went bad.'

Heini's father died in 1936. He had never been the pedagogic sadist depicted by Andersch and his profitable pen, but a stern man of quiet discipline and abiding religious fervour, inspired by a genuine *pietas bavarica*. The Germans however like their comfortable stereotypes: The Andersch novel was filmed and is now required reading for German schoolchildren. Stereotypes will continue to blur the image of Heinrich Himmler, confusing though it is. They choke history like bindweed in a jungle, through which we have first to hack and clear a path.

4: *Gaudeamus Igitur*

HE SITS IN THE TRAIN brooding, a few days after his nineteenth birthday in October 1919. There is a young couple seated opposite. He noticed them earlier, on the railroad platform; they are married, and he envies them. He is visiting Eichstätt, a town popular with pilgrims. It has a castle, built by mediæval princes and clergy – 'impossible with today's wages and workforce,' reflects Heinrich Himmler, the teenager. Twenty or more years from now he will command a slave-labour force of millions building much vaster structures.

He has brought along something to read, Friedrich Schiller's 1784 pamphlet on 'The Stage as a Moral Institution' – a call for playwrights to purify the German language; both are disciplines after his father's heart, and the Classics professor may well have pressed this reading matter into his hands. Lingering on rather lower ground, Heini has brought along a ghost story, *The White Hand*, to read as well.

He and Gebhard are visiting castles and monasteries and family – rattling along on the narrow-gauge railroad to Rebhard–Hofmühle station, and then on to the majestic church at Eichstätt, where their uncle Karl Patin has been a priest since 1894 in the famous abbey of St Walburg's, named after an English Benedictine missionary whose bones rest here for over twelve hundred years. Uncle Karl is just back from officiating at a funeral, and he invites them in for tea.

Heinrich Himmler is still getting to know his family in October 1919 as he prepares for his years of higher education: men of the cloth and Classical academics, that is his milieu.

THE TIDE OF WAR receding across Europe had left behind ugly whirlpools; Bavaria was in permanent unrest. Communists, socialists, regular army, and Free Corps disputed control, always keenly watched by the central government in Berlin.

The example of Hungary had struck terror into Munich's middle classes: in Budapest Béla Kun, a Transylvanian Communist (born Béla Cohn) seized power. In Munich, the turmoil continued after the killing of Kurt Eisner: a triumvirate of 'Russian' Jews under the St Petersburg-born Communist Evgenii Leviné, seized power on April 6, 1919, and proclaimed a 'Soviet Republic.' Leviné had agitated among his fellow soldiers for an *Allied* victory – using an argument identical to that of Hans Oster and future traitors. 'It is necessary,' Leviné said, 'that Germany is humiliated: that the colonial troops of France and England march through the Brandenburg Gate.'

Himmler's diaries and letters still make no mention of Jews but the backdrop to later events was already forming. The German government in Berlin, under socialist chancellor Friedrich Ebert, ordered the truncated army to crush the 'Soviet Republic' of Bavaria. Aided by the Free Corps and a substantial Bavarian army contingent under Colonel Franz Ritter von Epp it was bloodily suppressed, but not before Leviné's men took scores of middle-class burghers hostage, along with members of the right-wing Thule Society, and locked them away in the Luitpold *Gymnasium* building. These hostages were taken out two at a time, and bludgeoned and shot to death on the last night of April 1919. Leviné's accomplices were shot out of hand (except for Tovia Axelrod, who claimed Russian diplomatic status). Leviné was executed by firing squad at Munich's Stadelheim prison on July 9, of which we shall occasionally hear more.

ON JUNE 26, 1919 Himmler's father had become headmaster of the *Gymnasium* in Ingolstadt. For a few weeks Heini worked on a farm at Oberhaunstadt nearby. A work diary started on August 1 shows

him toiling in stables, fields, and the dairy. On August 15 he entered, 'Stables as usual. Church in the morning, with Mr Franz after lunch.'

On September 2 he fell ill with salmonella poisoning, and he remained bedridden for the rest of the month. On the twenty-fourth a doctor in Munich diagnosed an enlarged heart, and advised him to quit farm work for a year and concentrate on studies. Himmler transferred from rural Bavaria to Munich. He applied to study at the Polytechnic and paid the requisite fees. At the same time his brother Gebhard engaged to read mechanical engineering. The four storeyed building sat with its square, copper-sheathed clocktower between Gabelsberger Strasse and Theresien Strasse. The Polytechnic's file records them as living just two blocks away from the college at No. 5, Schelling Strasse, a street much trodden later in history.

The Polytechnic issued a matriculation certificate on October 18, 1919. Heini would study here until 1922. He had chosen to read agriculture, and he might well have prospered as a farmer; farmers seldom go hungry. The two brothers would share digs, and take their weekly bath at the Luisenbad (at home they had only an old-fashioned bath contraption). 'Our room looks very comfortable right now,' he wrote to his parents a few days later. 'I just wish you could see it. Everything excellently in its rightful place. In the mornings we drink tea, which is very good. We get up at six-thirty. Then we tot up our outgoings of the day before and reconcile them' – this no doubt for their father's benefit. 'For the morning break we always buy cheese.'

His mother did the laundry for them both. The parents still required him to practise the piano, and he struggled with the keys until they conceded defeat. He went back to Ingolstadt frequently, and took Thilde their old nanny from Sendling, the Munich suburb where she lived, to the Waldfriedhof to see one grandmother's grave and then a day later with Gebhard to the southern cemetery to visit their other's.

Like freshers everywhere, Heini signed up for everything – the Polytechnic union, an old boys' society, a breeding association, a gun club, the local Alpine society, and the officers' association of the 11th Infantry Regiment. The return to Munich, his big native city, also brought Heini together with Mariele, the sister of Ludwig Zahler, a former comrade during his military training at Regensburg; Ludwig

was Heini's second cousin, and became his best friend at the Poly.

THERE WAS ONE OVERHANGING PROBLEM, the growing left-wing unrest in Bavaria. The army might soon have him doing night patrols as a reservist. 'Dear Mother, Dear Father,' he wrote on November 6, 1919. 'Today you get your promised letter. Thanks a lot for your dear packages. The one with coat and fur jumpers arrived this morning. Gebhard collected the other at the post office this afternoon. Again, dear Mother, thanks a lot. After all, your boys are a bothersome pair. The possibility exists that they will call us up in a few days' time. . .'

After adding a breakdown of their expenses, he asked for more cash. 'Then Mother, we would like to for the following with our next laundry parcel (but there is absolutely no hurry): 1. smokes for Gebhard, 2. a little green cover for the travelling suitcase, 3. wax paper to wrap sandwiches, 4. Gebhard's electric flashlight, 5. . . .' Such letters are hard to paraphrase, but they provide much we need to know about Heinrich Himmler at this time.

After his recovery from illness he went to confession twice: he found himself thinking impure thoughts about women. He had begun cautious friendships – primarily with Ludwig's girl, Maja Loritz and also with Louisa Hager, the daughter of trusted family friends; her mother evidently approved, as the two females came round and joshed him. 'Friendship? Love?' pondered Himmler in his diary. 'Another step towards maturity. But I will stay indifferent.'

'Then over to the Hagers for lunch,' he confided on October 20, 1919, the day he registered at the Polytechnic: 'Mama Hager was as nice and kind to me as ever. Afterwards we talk about private dancing lessons.' Louisa resorted to tears, every woman's last resort. 'Floods of tears from the poor thing. I felt really sorry for her. She does not realise how pretty she is when she cries. I escorted her to the streetcar, then went to the State Library and read up on the war of 1812. From four to five o'clock I sat in on a lecture at the Veterinary School.' Louisa went to Communion every day, and she shot up in his esteem. 'This really was the best thing I have heard this last week.'

Most evenings after lectures, which began on November 3, the four friends went to concerts or an indoor swimming pool. Heini found

it difficult to juggle these two females, Maja and Louisa. With Maja he visited the theatre and talked about religion; he wrote rapturously, 'I think I've found a sister.' Less innocently perhaps, he was thrilled that she hooked her arm in his, as they went for a stroll with Gebhard and his girl. But Heini was plagued with irritation about Louisa – and twice he lamented in his pages, 'She won't let her hair down.'

THE PLEASURES WHICH MADE those evenings 'unforgettable' also helped young Heinrich Himmler overcome his tendency to adolescent depression. 'First of all Maja sang, "A Woman's Love and Sorrow." She sang the verses with tears in her eyes. I don't think Ludwig understands her, his Golden girl, but I can't be sure of that. I just don't get him. Later Gebhard and Käthe played the piano.' Käthe Loritz – also Maja – was Ludwig Zahler's girl, and later his wife. 'Ludwig and I shared an armchair. Marielle [Lacher] and Maja sat on the floor clinging to us both. We all cuddled, partly in love and partly in a fraternal embrace. It was an evening I won't easily forget.'

He felt sorry for poor Maja, he wrote on November 5, 1919; and two days later there was more of the same: then he sermonized to a hidden congregation in his diary, 'Yes, it's true: Mankind is a wretched creature. Restless is the heart, until it rests with Thee, O Lord. How powerless are we, we can't help it. I can but be a friend to my friends, do my duty, work, struggle with myself, and never allow myself to lose control.' After just a month living among educated youngsters like himself, he was beginning to question everything. Louisa no longer excited him. On Sunday morning he went to the cathedral for Mass and the sermon, and then over to her family, the Hagers: 'Louisa was nice enough, but not the way I like.' He spent a cheerful evening after that with Maja's family. 'Today I have by and large regained my spiritual balance. God will help me forwards.'

Thus as he plunged into the world of agriculture an inner turmoil began, between the strict religious doctrines impressed upon him by his parents, and the unfamiliar chemistry of student life and adolescence. 'I work,' he wrote on November 11, 1919, 'because it is my duty, because I find peace in work; and I work for my Germanic ideal of womanhood with whom I shall one day live my life and fight

my battles as a German in the East, far from my beloved Germany.'

One evening a hypnotist came round to the Loritz household and tried his black art on them. 'I summoned up all my powers of resistance,' boasted Heini. 'Obviously it did not work with me. But it did totally with poor little Maja. I felt so sorry for her when I saw her go under. I could have strangled the dog in cold blood. I worked against him where I could. . . His mind-reading was very good, but I think anybody capable of concentrating could do it with sufficient practice. I instinctively disliked the fellow, I hate this whole swindle; it only comes off if you go along with him.'

He loved Maja's eagerness to help; she made a fair-copy in twenty pages of neat handwriting for him of his zoology paper, and repeated the drawings with great care. A day or two later he helped her with her math, and 'she thanked me very much ——' (he drew a careful line, and did that again the next day). His heart in a whirl, *zerwühlt*, he wrote that Friday evening: 'Then over to the Loritz's for a meal. Maja was very nice ——' and there was the line again. (Those who research in private diaries know not to ignore such signs.)

He was still acquiring social graces. That included taking lessons in ballroom dancing, which he loathed as only a nineteen-year-old can. 'Diary, November 15, 1919: From eight to ten at dancing-class. ✠ ✠ ✠' – and here he inserted three crosses. 'All beginnings are hard,' he added, using a German apohorism, 'but I'll get the hang of it. Dance classes seem pretty pointless to me, and just a waste of time.' 'What a disgusting fraud it all is,' he commented. 'But I'll be glad once I've learned to do it, and I can dance with whoever takes my fancy.' 'If I could only look danger squarely in the eye,' he added in one entry, 'risk my life somewhere, fight, that would be a real liberation for me.'

HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WOMEN at all. After supper one evening he and Maja played the piano. 'I think we see eye to eye. By God's grace!' He hurried home and worked some more on his Russian, a language he had started to learn. They held hands a lot that winter, or read books together, like the 1911 love story by Richard Voss, *Zwei Menschen*, Two People: the hero's mother, a religious fanatic, dies of grief when he fails to take orders as a priest; guilt-stricken, he dumps

his girl, whereupon she too kills herself, and he officiates at her funeral. Yes, women were odd creatures, and he spent a lot of his time feeling sorry for them. Maja performed more student chores for him, and he felt guilty about Louisa: 'Over at four p.m. to the Hagers,' he wrote: 'I feel sorry for Louisa but there's not much I can do. Perhaps this first big episode in her life will help her grow up.' With Louisa he talked about everything under the sun, but then it was back to Maja. They kissed goodnight, and on Odeon Square afterwards a hooker caught up with him. 'Obviously without scoring,' he virtuously recorded. 'But interesting all the same.'

With Maja, the girl with the flaxen hair, came the inevitable denouement. It was the last day of November 1919. 'I don't know if I'm imagining it, but Maja is not the same toward me as she used to be.' He took her skating the next day. The ticket is still tucked into his diary today, together with five snapshots of a young girl.

HUMBLED BY DEFEAT, RUINED BY REPARATIONS, the future for Germany looked bleak. A nameless gloom assailed Himmler, the military reservist. On November 7, 1919 he and Lou fetched helmets; he already had 'the King's tunic,' as he called it, explaining, 'I'm a soldier and always will be.' 'Gebhard, Lou, and I talked some more,' he wrote, 'about how fine it would have been to go off to war together. Perhaps then I wouldn't be here today – one fighting heart fewer. . . In a few years' time I may yet go off to war and do battle. I'm looking forward to the war of liberation,' he hinted, 'and if there's still a sound limb left on me I'll be there.' 'Today,' he wrote on December 1, 1919, 'I've got a uniform on again. It's the only suit I love to wear. . .'

Now nineteen, he began thinking of emigrating – to Russia. Back in Ingolstadt for a day, he talked it over with his parents. 'There's no place like home,' he wrote. 'Went for an evening stroll and a long chat – with Papa about Louisa, with Mama about the Russia thing mostly, and about the political and economic future. I prayed in the evening and was in bed by ten-thirty already.' He missed his mother's hot-chocolate comforts: 'It's nice to be back home again,' he wrote a few days before Christmas, 'then you can be a child again.'

Louisa or Maja? 'How happy could I be with either,' John Gay had

written in *The Beggar's Opera*, 'Were t'other dear charmer away.' On the eve of St Nicholas, December 6, Heini found a mystery present, a gift hamper; from a blonde hair which his careful search discovered on it, he deduced that it was from Maja. On the way to the ice rink with Ludwig on the eighth, they talked about Maja, Käthe, and Gebhard, but at the ice rink Maja was downright obnoxious. The gift was from another blonde. 'Just shows how stupid a man in love can be.' He decided, 'If I don't find the girl who loves me, then I'll head off to Russia alone. If Maja is still in love with me, then I'm glad for her because it's great to love and be loved.' A few days later, he summed up: 'Maja is ignoring me. With her and Louisa I have learned one lesson: "There's none so cruel as girls who have once loved you."'

A NATIONALIST STUDENT corporation, the Apollo, had invited him to join. King Ludwig I of Bavaria (1786–1868) had been an Apollonian, Heini assured his father. But it was a *duelling* fraternity, and this would not be without consequences. He went over to their meeting place, quaffed two tankards of beer despite his weak stomach, recited Carl Loewe's ballad *Die Uhr*, The Clock, and rather liked the way that everybody liked him. ('All very nice to me,' he confided to his diary pages. 'I'm terrifically proud to be in a student corporation.')

In mid-December 1919 he chatted with friends about religion, and thought it over on his way home. 'However it turns out, I will always love my God, pray to Him, and cleave to and defend the Catholic church – even if I'm to be excommunicated' – the church's automatic penalty for duelling. Lying in bed a few days later, as the old year 1919 ended, he read *Eleven Years a Freemason*. He was seeking answers, as nineteen-year-old men do.

The year would see his final break with his Church. He probably hadn't intended it that way, but he wanted to be accepted by his fellow students, and particularly by his fraternity, the Apollo – but they drank, they whored, and they duelled. Heini had problems with each of these requirements: his weakened stomach could not tolerate much ale – in fact he had obtained a *Bierdispens* from the Apollo, a dispensation freeing him from the obligation to drink the stuff; as for women, he had privately vowed to remain pure until marriage;

but duelling was a different matter. Under canon law (Canon 2351), duellers faced excommunication. Excommmunication was applied to any who duelled, seconded, watched, or participated in any way. He was not a fearful man, but he still feared the wrath of God.

To please his fraternity brothers he learned to use the duelling sabre, and professed to look forward to his first bout. Women would remain an alien species – why, he did not even enjoy holding these creatures at the dancing classes. He would lose Maja and Louisa, and they faded from the diary pages.

IN DUELLING WITH SABRES, of which we shall hear more, the rule is that nobody actually wins: it is not even an affair of honour; the outcome turns on the judgment of the spectators. Most of the combatants' body is padded, but their faces are exposed; they must duel until the requisite slash drawing blood is inflicted across one cheek. The resulting scar is borne lifelong with dignity – the *Schmiss* which will embellish, or disfigure, so many of Himmler's later associates like Kaltenbrunner or Skorzeny. The spectators watch for any signs of flinching.

Perhaps duelling and its emphasis on honour, explains why Germany would fight on when all was lost. When blood, much blood, was drawn in the forthcoming conflict, Germany did not flinch, with the exception of the traitors of July 1944. In the last years before military defeat engulfed its people, the whole country wore the scars with pride and painful fortitude.

5: *Young Man with a Jovial Grin*

GOD-FEARING, FRUGAL, CLEAN-LIVING, AND SERIOUS MINDED, in many ways Heinrich Himmler at nearly twenty is an admirable product of his hard-working middle-class family. The young man still has to account for every pfennig and justify each demand on his father's pocket. *'Abgerechnet.* Reconciled,' features almost nightly in his diary. The voice of his father, still teaching Classics at the *Gymnasium* in Ingolstadt, rings in his ears. Heini smokes cigarettes and the occasional gift cigar, but does not do drugs; he is not a homosexual, though mildly curious about their perversions. He takes a qualified interest in female company; he tells his older brother he will remain celibate until marriage, and six years or more will elapse before he loses his virginity, and then to the much older woman, a divorcee, who has snared him, and whom he will eventually marry.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WENT HOME TO INGOLSTADT with Gebhard for that Christmas of 1919, and they exchanged gifts – 'at six-thirty,' as Heini recorded. There was a pipe from Gebhard, and books from his father, including Classics from the bequeathed library of the late Prince Heinrich himself; the young prince had fallen to a sniper's bullet in Romania in 1916. 'How wonderful it was,' Heinrich wrote of this traditional family Yuletide in 1919. Gebhard played the piano

and they drank punch. At midnight they trooped over to Mass, the three boys all wearing their white bow-ties standing right up front in the beautiful choir. The High Latin ritual, the regalia and familiar ceremony gripped Heini once again. During the sermon an inner turmoil beset him as never before: 'The duelling thing kept crowding in on me. In the evening I prayed, I thought I had more or less put it behind me earlier. God will help me in the midst of all my doubts.'

Yes, the duelling. 'It was interesting to watch,' wrote Heini. 'It strengthens your nerve, and you learn to receive an injury calmly.' He was a spectator several times that January 1920 at *Mensur* – what might be called exhibition duelling, named for the formal measure separating combatants. 'Two-thirty,' he wrote on the twenty-first: 'To the *Kneipe* for five sets of *Mensur*.' The *Kneipe*, colloquially a pub, played a part in student life – the assembly room in the student corporation's house and, by extension, a function with beer-swilling, singing, speech-making, and ceremonial – the members attending in full corporate *Couleur*, with pillbox hats, multicoloured sashes and the other regalia of office which were so important to their student existence.

HE STILL TOOK ONLY A PASSING INTEREST in politics. He remarked with distaste upon one sermon for polemicising against Prussia – geographically the more northern and eastern provinces of Germany but historically a vague concept too, associated with militarism and Protestant piety. On January 15, 1920, walking two ladies home with his *Leibburschen*, his student 'mentors' from the Apollo, he ran into a noisy demonstration being dispersed by the army – the Reichswehr – on the Stachus – the busiest square in Munich.

A police court had just sentenced to death Count Arco-Valley, the student who had assassinated Kurt Eisner. Heinrich and other students embarked upon some juvenile plotting to liberate their hero from prison. 'Donned my uniform,' he recorded two days later. 'At eight o'clock a big student demo in the university's main auditorium to demand a pardon for Arco.' In a hint at nationalist sentiments, he added, 'A magnificent patriotic assembly.' But it all fizzled out, and the sentence was almost at once commuted. 'Oh well,' resigned

Heinrich, 'there's always another time. Now people have seen what to expect from the universities of *Grossdeutschland*' – and he used the word for 'Germany' which evoked its future unification with Austria.

That winter his diaries refer to several rococo parties, and the efforts that Heini, his friend Ludwig Zahler, and Käthe put into designing costumes. The jovial grin that brightens many photographs of Heinrich Himmler began to appear. Clinking tankards he and Lou swore brotherly love, and danced until late with their girls, and there were games of forfeits 'with much kissing,' as Heini recorded with triumph afterwards. Beer still disagreed with him but wine went down better, and one night he boasted to his unquestioning notebook that he had polished off eight glasses. As for the other kind of glasses – the ones he wore in class – he preferred an old fashioned pince-nez. After a visit to his optician *Hofrat* Krebeck that January, 1920, Heini wrote that 'Gott sei Dank' his eyesight was no worse.

There is no trace of any political engagement at this time. On May 16, 1920 'Heinrich Himmler of 14 Alarm-Kompanie' signed for one rifle, one steel helmet, two cartridge pouches, and one haversack, old-style, issued by the Bavarian Home Guard. His commander was a Major Angerer, who flitted in and out of his later diary pages and eventually came to study at the Polytechnic too.

Assigned by the Polytechnic to a smallholding at Fridolfing he threw himself into farm life. He worked for twelve months from September 1920, right on the Austrian border east of Munich. He wrote his parents about his adventures in reaching the farmstead across flooded country lanes:

> Got here safe and sound on September 7 at ten-thirty a.m. I went to Traunstein and then took the [small-gauge] railroad to Waging. I wanted to bike on to Fridolfing that same night at nine-thirty p.m. but I got talked out of it because I didn't know the way and there was flooding everywhere. So I had supper and spent the night in the Schwanenbräu hostelry and sallied forth at eight next morning. At one point on the way to Taching I had to carry my bike and fifty-pound rucksack across a powerful stream for about fifty yards with flooding up to my ankles.

Near Tettenhausen the water was waist high, so rather than risk that I took a detour via Tengling. The roads from Tengling to Fridolfing were like raging streams with a lot of debris. Just before Fridolfing I had to traverse fifty yards of knee-deep floodwater and then a rickety bridge and thirty yards more of knee-deep water and then, hooray, a glorious ride into the village.

They gave me a grand welcome and I am very well. Many thanks for the hairbrush, and much love and kisses

from your truly affec. son, Heinrich.

Heinrich lived *en famille* with the farmer Alois Rehrl, and slept in their children's room. He thought the world of Rehrl, describing him as 'a man of upright, honest, and strongly moral character and of a sound and kindly heart.' It is how he wanted to be seen later. Throughout his own childhood, there had been no trace of dishonesty in him. Twice a week he wrote home to Ingolstadt, two hundred miles away, the kind of epistles which every parent hopes to receive.

'Dearest Mama,' he wrote his mother on her birthday that January 1921. 'I wish you all the very best that only a grateful, good son can wish his mother. Stay well for us always, and I hope your migraine will now allow you some peace. We, your two little boys, want to be a joy to you forever.' He related their latest ski trip to Reichenhall: they had left their skis below for want of snow and climbed the Reiter Alp instead and spent the night in a mountain hut. Writing five days later he resorted to a more calculated prose: 'I am sitting in my comfortable and well-heated room, and before I start my studies I want to chat with you a bit' – and so he did before coming to the point, about the spring-like weather, about the dancing-class, about the sing-song he had gone to and his own contribution, a couple of Friedrich Schiller's classical ballads: 'I attach my accounts. I am down to forty marks.' Pleased with which effort, he signed off, 'Your grateful son, Heinrich.'

Farmer Rehrl in turn described his new trainee as hard-working and conscientious. 'He worked with us in the milling operations despite the winter and rainiest days and gained valuable experience,' he wrote in his testimonial for Heinrich. A letter of February 18, 1921 showed that Rehrl had advised him to put in for a free one-week

mechanics course. 'I decided to register first,' Heini apologised to his parents, 'and ask your permission after.'

Years later he told Karl Wolff that if things had gone differently he would have liked to manage some great government estate or noble family landholding, because that was his education.

THE MECHANICS COURSE WAS AT THE TRAUNSTEIN works of tractor manufacturers Epple & Buxbaum AG. He persuaded his parents to foot the living costs – he was down to twenty-five marks, and shoe repairs had made a hole in his pocket. 'Don't be mad at me for asking so soon again,' he cajoled them. 'I do hate doing it.' It was from Traunstein therefore that he thanked his mother on February 28 for the latest cakes and cash. 'The course at Epple & Buxbaum begins today at two. Probably got to go to Munich for a day because of my exam thing. . . Rest of the time I'm studying at night too.'

'Easter will be very nice and cheerful,' he wrote his mother afterwards. 'I often play cards with Herr Rehrl. But I am not neglecting my chemistry studies.' Then he turned to domestic matters – he had had trousers made, his wristwatch and pocket watch both needed repair. 'But that doesn't mean I'm out of cash,' he added hastily, as he still had two hundred marks – a hint at how inflation was already biting. 'I am just mentioning it so you don't get a shock from my next accounts.' Writing his father a month later he carefully ended with a few words in Latin to flatter the old man, adding: 'Greetings and kisses with fond love from your Heinrich.'

His letter of May 8 was filled with things which became a standby when naught else occurred to him: 'I always get up at four-thirty, and start work at five. From tomorrow they will call us in every day, to make the semolina and bring the forage into the stable. By day there's heaps to do. Last week we planted – cutting potatoes, laying them in furrows, spreading artificial fertiliser, I've done it all. Then cutting wood along the rain-ditches, a tedious job, hacking away with axe and hoe and saw. We've got a little dinghy for this. . . I take it out for little jaunts in the evening (but don't pull a face and start worrying). This evening Mr Rehrl and I go fishing,' presumably on the River Inn. And so he chattered on. 'Tomorrow afternoon I'm off to a

peasant wedding. I attach my accounting for the 350 marks, I'll keep the 97 marks and ten pfennigs balance here and add them to next month. I'm so pleased that E. & B. have accepted me for Ingolstadt. Could you please drop a hint that I ought to get 40 pfennigs an hour as an apprentice just like Gebhard –' and he added a dozen words in shorthand.

Writing from the farm for his father's birthday Heini wished him 'from the bottom of my truly loyal heart everything imaginable and good one could possibly want for a dear father.' It rang slightly familiar to his later letters. 'May you soon see – and surely you shall – that our German fatherland is once again great and wonderful. That is my first desire, as in our prayers the Fatherland comes, next to God, first and foremost. My second is that you should have much joy with us three boys and live long and happy years with our good Mama. I promise you I will always try to be, and to stay, on my best behaviour. And third, I wish that you should remain blessedly in office for many years to come.'

Heini again spoke of the long hours that he worked in the fields: 'In two weeks the hay harvest begins. Time flies, eh, I've been here almost three-quarters of a year already. I'll tell you about the peasant wedding when I see you, and meanwhile I'm making notes on all the customs and rituals; it would be too much to write you about them.'

We note the shift in interest from religion to peasant folklore.

BIOGRAPHERS HAVE unquestioningly seen him as a physical weakling, but his stamina appears noteworthy. On May 22, 1921 he described to his mother another bike journey through the mountains:

> Set out by bike from here [Fridolfing] at four on Whit Sunday. By seven I was already in Salzburg after a hot but lovely journey, that's thirty-one kilometres. The route took me through Laufen, Surheim, Salzburg docks, and Freilassing. From Laufen you could already see the Hohensalzburg fortress, a magnificent sight. . .
>
> Whit Monday at six-thirty, on to Berchtesgaden –

and how he must have remembered this bike trip in later years, when

he attended conferences above the town amidst these very mountains.

> Went to church there, and then onward to the Königssee. Rode around a bit, looked at the Obersee. Spectacular, this mountain scenery. Back to Berchtesgaden, had a meal on the way. Then on through Ramsau to the Hintersee. Up the Hirschbichel Pass, 1,200 metres – obviously I had to push the bike. Back down again the other side, and I had to dismount again because it went down too steeply. On to Oberweissbach. Ate and spent the night there. Drank wine with fraternity students from Jena, and sang songs of the *Kommers* [a student function like a *Kneipe*, but more formal].
>
> Whit Tuesday: Biked along the Saalach river through Saalfelden to Zell am See, thirty kilometres, got there at nine-thirty. The great snowcapped High Tauern towering ahead of me. [These mountains are the highest in Austria.] Went rowing a bit. Then took the train to Salzburg, and on to Oberndorf (Laufen) and then biked back to Fridolfing. . . This week we start bringing in the hay, the grain is already in full bloom.

Back on the farm, he mowed the fields, fed the cattle, ate with the hands, drank coffee and beer with them, and sat around after supper taking tea with the family. 'Around seven or seven-fifteen I'm up to my garret to write and study and read a bit. Wednesdays and Saturdays I go to the gym. Fridays, singing. Sometimes I go fishing or off hunting with a fellow down in the Au, and don't you go getting worked up about it, it's quite safe and good fun. Some Sunday evenings Farmer Rehrl and I go after supper to the Strohhof for a glass of beer,' – that is still a popular inn on the outskirts of Fridolfing. 'Last Sunday morning I joined in the Corpus Christi procession.' And so forth.

After a further list of the harvesting, planting, milling and other farm tasks, he concluded: 'Tell Papa not to work so hard, but to go for walks more often each week, so he doesn't overdo it.'

His parents doted on Heini. His mother sent him cigarettes, his father cigars and more cash. He took his singing particularly seriously. The pope had just elevated Archbishop Michael von Faulhaber to Cardinal. On Sunday June 5 the Fridolfing Glee Club,

the *Sängerbund*, serenaded the new cardinal with three songs. 'He was delighted and gave each of us a beautiful little picture, even to me, the "hard-boiled and very public sinner."'

'He is a tall man of unusually *spiritualised* countenance,' he added. More than once in letters home Heinrich referred to himself in jest as 'the bad boy.' There was to be a big song festival in Tittmoning, a few miles away, he added: 'Don't worry about my overdoing it. The gymnastics are doing me good, and I am really glad to have that opportunity.'

Weeks of rain had delayed the harvesting – the hay just ended, the grain just beginning. On July 10 Heini did his accounts for the last two months – accounting for every pfennig of the 423 marks his parents had sent him – bars of soap, postage stamps, shoe-soles and laces, a bicycle-cape, cigarettes, watch-repairs, cigarillos, haircuts, his subscription to the Apollo, and so forth, all totalling 371·05 marks – leaving him, he calculated, with a credit balance of 51·95 marks. Having done the sums, he submitted fresh requests – 180 marks for the tailor, and cash to cover the remaining seven weeks at the farm. 'That Ernstl now gets up at six a.m. is good news,' mocked Heini. 'But the little bedbug shouldn't get big-headed about it as other folks have already been up and about an hour and a half by that time.'

For the two last months of that summer of 1921 the young man worked as a trainee in the Ingolstadt branch of Epple & Buxbaum, which had meanwhile become 'Vereinigte Fabriken Landwirtschaftlicher Maschinen,' the United Agricultural Machinery Works. Here too he excelled by his industry, as a director certified when he left.

HE RETURNED TO THE Polytechnic that autumn. Economic turmoil gripped Europe; inflation was starting to rip society apart.

His older brother Gebhard was living in Ingolstadt again. He was painting watercolours, and Heini took them, a few at a time, to Hermann Tietz, a prosperous Jewish-owned Munich department store. A new girl appeared. Her name was Stölzle, a good looking distant cousin, now Gebhard's girlfriend. Heini saw her when she arrived one day from Ingolstadt, and his surprise was evident.

In a disapproving diary entry. Heini wrote: 'Yet another, escaping from our circle of two years ago. Because the tie to a female is powerful: thou shalt leave thy mother and father, and bond to a woman. I'm glad that once again two people so close to me are finding happiness. For me, however, The Struggle.'

He privately decided to see Paula off, but a few days later he bought a betrothal present for the couple, Agnes Günther's book *The Saint and Her Fool*. (Published posthumously, it was the author's only novel, a tearjerker about a prince's daughter, her loves and life, and her jealous stepmother; it succeeded in reducing female readers to sobbing – no doubt one of them had recommended it as a suitable gift for Gebhard and Paula.) 'He is very happy, the good old fellow,' he wrote about his older brother. 'I like him frightfully, and Ernstl. He's another decent chap.' Gebhard showed Heini an album and the poem he had written for Paula in it: 'The things they do for love,' sniggered Heini. He hoped he would never be smitten like that.

LIKE ALL BOYS HE WAS CLOSER TO HIS mother, to judge from the letters he sent her and his father. Back at the Polytechnic, he penned a recital of all he had done, adopting the kind of reassuring language that mothers like from their absent sons: The day before, he had gone to chapel, then on to the Waldfriedhof to lay a wreath, and then to his grandmother's poorly tended grave, and found the ivy creeping out of the cracks beneath its magnificent crucifix. The high point was lunch with Thilde, his old nanny in Sendling, and her husband, what psycho-analysts see as 'uninhibited oral gratification': it included a dumpling soup, veal, tenderloin roast, potatoes, and an endive salad washed down with beer and followed by apple pie, with coffee and pastries to follow. 'When I left, Thilde gave me cakes and root beer too, and went with me as far as The Harras' – a well known crossroads. That afternoon Heini went to a cemetery and sketched where the grave of Alois Heyder, his maternal grandfather, needed repair.

He had supper as usual with the Loritz family. Frau Loritz cooked meals for several students to eke out her widow's mite. 'I always eat at home except for Sundays and holidays when I eat at the Loritz's, and

once a week when I eat in the student refectory.' This brought him to the October bills for himself and brother Gebhard: 'That's fifteen marks for the three suppers at home, plus thirty – lunch costs six not five as we had calculated. Sorry to ask also for two hundred marks for college fees as we are already 34 marks short, I have not yet signed up for political economy, nor any exams, nor the lab., nor any of the other essential courses and still don't have a single textbook.'

He thanked his 'liebstes Mutterle,' his darling mummy, for the hamper she had lovingly put together for him, crammed with meat and fine pastries, and told her how his social calendar was filling. 'I am visiting the widow of Public Prosecutor Kornberger today, and next Sunday [November 27] I will pay my Court visit' – to Princess Arnulf. 'Now, about the trousers. I prefer the broad stripes. That cloth has one advantage, it can be reversed. Last Saturday,' he continued without pause, 'I went on an animal breeding field-trip to Gmund on Tegernsee and Miesbach. . . Ask Gebhard to let me know if the picture arrived at Wertheim's,' he added, referring to the large Jewish-owned department store in Berlin. 'I just want to know it hasn't gone missing. Perhaps Paula can mention this to Gebhard.'

HE HAD BY NOW mastered the rites of student corporations, with their arcane names and ranks. His diary entries for 1921 and 1922 often read like a foreign tongue, until they are decoded with the glossaries of student life of the Nineteen-Twenties. On November 2, 1921 he wrote: 'Until eight p.m. in the Franziskaner Lustbräu beerhall for the Hylesia fraternity's *Kommers*. I was down to orate for the Apollo, but Altstätter of Babenbergia wangled it for himself and spoke on the fraternity's behalf.' He continued: 'In my view the Hylesia will definitely do well. They've got the guts and the good will; they're mostly older guys who've seen war service, and you can always read up on the *Comment*.' *Comment* was one of the many French terms used in German student duelling: roughly, the know-how.

'November 26: At three p.m. on the duelling floor. Light sabre bout, with Rieger of the Donaria Freising fraternity [mostly agronomy students] against one of Gotiae of the S.V. . . The neutral was a Normanne [Normannia fraternity, Berlin] of W.S.C. [the Weinheim

Senioren-Convent]. On the Gotiae side drew blood twice (face scratches); he ducked' – *mucksen*, to pull the head back from the blade, which was unpardonable: 'The Donaria fellow took a few flat blades on the arm, he was a powerful guy and fought from immense depth. It went for forty-five sets. There is something uniquely venerable about duelling,' added Heinrich, thoughtfully. 'Something typically German-student.' On December 3 the fraternity held a court of honour over a student called Brückmeier for some misdemeanour – perhaps flinching. 'I took the minutes,' noted Heini. 'Verdict: three *heavy* sabre-bouts.' (In these the fighters wear less padding and protection than in 'light' bouts.) 'I thought *light* would have sufficed. Brückmeier went very pale.'

After watching nine sets on December 7 he wrote: 'The Hylesia fraternity were also spectators. It was very interesting. I can now take pleasure in watching, as I have got over first impressions' – which were evidently less pleasurable. On January 14, 1922 there was more ritual: 'Light sabre bout between fraternity brothers Markmiller and Kraft of the Franconia in Erlangen. Our seconder was Reider. Theirs was the older Kraft, a totally crazy guy with more than twenty sets to his name, and all mouth. Independent referee for us Bavarians was a Mr Heidler. He didn't know the ropes,' that is, he didn't know the *Comment*. 'He was way out of his depth. It was a real mess. Markmiller took two on top, a scratch, and a flat blade on the arm. About the tenth round he stabbed Kraft on the third skinflap. There was a huge crowd there, guests from all the corporations.'

These private papers show that surrounded by duelling, politicking students during the day, Himmler at twenty-one still felt most at ease with his pious parents, and midst the quiet surroundings of Catholic church architecture like St Michael's, the largest Renaissance church north of the Alps. He particularly loved the *Hofkirche*, the Royal church, for its rich ornaments and frescoes of Old Testament scenes. This was the Church of All Saints, where his cousin the pastor, Dr Willi Patin, sometimes conducted High Mass. Heini had gone there for Mass at eight a.m. on Sunday November 27: 'Wonderful choir,' he wrote, referring to the frescoes. 'In this church I feel at home.'

His diary for that day records the audience he had sought at the

palace with 'Her Royal Highness Princess Arnulf of Bavaria,' mother the late Prince Heinrich. (Thus her royal style. She was Princess Theresa von und zu Liechtenstein.) The agriculture student and the elderly princess, they chatted about politics, Spain, and relations with Northern Germany, and about Gustav Ritter von Kahr, the monarchist lawyer who had until recently been prime minister of Bavaria and, to his misfortune, would soon be appointed again. They also talked about Bavaria's last monarch, the late ex-King Ludwig III, who had just been buried on November 5. Heini's reverence of the monarchy had long outlasted the institution, and he had attended the king's state funeral wearing a top hat and borrowed morning suit, just one of the tens of thousands of loyal Bavarians lining the streets of Munich to thrill and shudder at the mournful thud of muffled drums as the cortège passed.

Heinrich had probably thought the princess comfortably off, but he learned differently and felt ashamed of his ignorance. He went to see the widow of Public Prosecutor Kornberger again. 'She is very poor, and people are horribly insensitive to that. That's Christians for you' – possibly a nod to Germany's wealthy Jews, and their vaunted 'philanthropy' toward their own kind. 'The word is that the princess is not well off either; a lesson, that, never to think badly of somebody without being sure of your facts.' It is an indication that he had been hoping for something from the royal widow, having lost her only son, his own godfather, in the war.

HE WROTE TO HIS father more rarely, and carefully mentioned nothing about the duelling in these letters home. On December 2, 1921 his letter began: 'Dear Papa! Now you get a letter after some time. Gebhard will have told you about my affairs of state' – *Staatsaktionen*, perhaps a reference to his audience with the princess. 'I heard from Frau Loritz that Gebhard hurt himself. I hope he gets better quickly. Now various things –,' and the letter turned to more formal matters: could Gebhard bring back bed-linen and potatoes, and the army had 'at last' awarded Heini the character of a *Fähnrich*, or ensign, and he'd be grateful if Mama could send him some shirts. Before sending her his regular package of laundry on the eighth, he

strolled over to have a look at the Wittelsbach *Gymnasium*: his father was to become its new principal, a great honour, from May 1922.

He tried in vain to get interested in the arts. Wanting to form his own opinions about widely-touted playwrights like Frank Wedekind, he applied in vain for tickets to *Pandora's Box*, a gloomy play of its times – Lulu has shot her third husband, escapes prison to Paris, starts a new life as a fake countess, and ends up as a hooker in London. The tickets were, inevitably, sold out and Heini plunged into even gloomier fare, Henrik Ibsen's play *Brand*. 'I want to sample once again his uncompromising straightforwardness,' he told his diary. It was an intellectual play designed to make people 'think outside the box,' to use modern terminology. In it, Brand ponders Man's Purpose, and speculates on the difference between what is, and what should be. 'What you are, be fully,' Brand proclaims, 'not in bits and pieces.' It sounds now like some kind of army recruiting slogan. We do not know what Heinrich made of this pretentious nonsense, but dragging his girlfriends along to such evenings may well have contributed to his increasingly barren masculine existence.

THE READER MAY WEARY of these early diaries, and their relevance; but there is good reason to piece together this mosaic. Heinrich Himmler was already approaching the halfway point in his short life. The child is father of the man: and History asks that we show particular interest about the child who had fathered this studious, pious youth, and now about the youth who fathered the extraordinary man that our subject of inquiry was soon to become.

6: *That's How They Are*

LOUISA HAGER WAS PAST HISTORY. When Heinrich Himmler visited her familiar Munich neighbourhood in mid November 1921, he wrote: 'Happy, I'd almost say melancholy, are the memories that the St Anna district awakens in me each time. Why do people who are so dear to our hearts have to be so bad, or become that way? All over.'

Uncertain too, was his love affair with Russia. Back in November 1919 he had signed up for Russian lessons; he had taken an interest in the vast post-Tsarist empire. Now Turkey captured his interest: coming back from that field trip to Gmund he had met a Turk, who told him the British had 'bought' all the Turkish newspapers and were behind everything. He clipped an article about emigrating to Peru. 'Whither will life take me?' he mused. 'Spain? Turkey? The Baltic states? Peru?' A few weeks later it was Georgia, and a friend at dinner talked about the country, their fine people and beautiful countryside. Again he wrote, 'Whither shall I wander,' and he added wistfully: 'Which woman shall I love, and which will love me?'

Another girl, Kätherle, little Kate, perhaps Käthe Loritz, returned after two years to claim Louisa's place as female-on-duty, and it was as though nothing had changed in those two years. 'Käthe'rle says

that privately she will always feel close to me. . . I am just against the way females out of sheer vanity take over in things where they are devoid of any talents,' Heinrich wrote on November 24, 1921, and added these words about women: 'A decent man will love a woman who through feminine wisdom and pure and childlike holiness gives him the strength to fight the hardest battles without faltering, and who gives him the most divine inspiration in the most ideal hours.'

Heinrich was now twenty-one. The sexual availability of young women should have gratified the young man but it did not. His old grandmother, his mother's mother, had passed on one piece of wisdom about them: 'One should buy the cow straight out of the stall,' and disregard the flibbertigibbets who 'dance around until they get a man.' When Fasching came around, the German annual festival of licentiousness and excess, the Loritz's talked him into attending their harem Party. He went dressed as a Turkish sultan, 'Abdul Hamid,' wearing the appropriate stage make-up. Lou Zahler came as the legendary rabbi, 'Ben Joseph Akība.' Kätherle was an Indian maharaja and two other females came as Turkish girls in pantaloons.

Heini was entranced and shocked and guilt-ridden at the same time. 'The room was turned into a harem,' his diary tells us, 'with the ceiling hung with drapes and lanterns, and a tent next to the corner fireplace for Lou and me to put on our act about Oriental life. . . Two a.m. before we got home. Walked with Lou a bit. We talked about how dangerous such things are. I mean, lying together as couples, body to body, hot, person to person, you just catch fire somehow, you really have to keep a grip on what you are doing. Girls get so carried away so easily that they don't know what they're doing, and there is this intense sub-conscious longing of your whole being for the satisfaction of a terrifically strong primæval urge. – You could do whatever you want with those girls; you've got your work cut out keeping yourself under control. Girls, I feel sorry for them.'

YES, FEMALES WERE A RATHER FRIGHTENING species. At a drinking session at the Hofbräuhaus beerhall, the waitress caught his eye – the female staff's busty dirndl dresses being, beside the beer, a main attraction. 'She was quite pretty, a well-developed young thing with

a nice face,' he recalled afterwards. 'I felt quite sorry for her. Every waitress inevitably gets sucked into the swamp. If I were a wealthy man and had the money, I'd give her enough to get married, so she wouldn't have to sink and be lost.' He never forgot that waitress.

Walking home he again talked it over with Lou – 'about getting engaged, and about the disadvantage of the betrothed being together throughout the engagement: the wooing and jousting are over, yet one possesses only a part of her – and her body not at all. As Professor Gruber puts it: Two people could never survive a whole lifetime together, chained to each other as closely as married couples are, were it not for the one unifying factor, sxl. intercourse' – and the puritanical Heini abbreviated the horrid word. Lou blurted out that Käthe Loritz was always making 'incredible demands on him.' Heini wondered what that meant. He went home and worked out, and he copied Max von Gruber's actual wording from the Gothic print into his own spiky Sütterlin script.

The diary betrays a cynicism toward females in general. At one point Ludwig had the usual showdown with his girl, and Käthe rounded on Heini, screeching that it was all his fault. What man has not been there before? Heini wrote it all down, to clear his mind and purge his conscience: 'Fetched Lou. Käthe weeps her heart out. Big row over what I said at midday. The old story: I just cause trouble with everything I say. Not Lou's fault, it's not him she's talking about. It's me, I'm to blame. Lou doesn't understand her. "You don't understand either of us." I am trying to steal Lou away from her. Major waterworks. Says I wasn't thinking of them. I suspect her Mama's behind it. Lou is hideously embarrassed, totally on my side. I tell him this: we two will always be the same.'

'I'll break off things with Käthe and Frau Loritz for the time being. . . I'll pretend nothing has happened. Not that I expect any thanks from her. It would be dreadful if they were to break up over me. . . Who'd have thought this possible two years ago? I hope Käthe snaps out of it. Käthe would like to get back to just like two years ago with me. I ask folks to tell her I have nothing more to say to her, other than that I am through with her – *and* her mother.'

Heini followed with four pages of fierce handwriting describing all

the manipulative characteristics of the female of the species – the sobbing, the making up, the apologising, and the whining all over again. Fortunately diaries do not complain, or interrupt, or answer back. So he shouted in ink to his pages that he had broken this cycle, and checkmated these selfish, self-centred, jealous, spiteful creatures. 'I am too good to play second fiddle to these female tantrums.'

Whereupon the truly narcissistic element came to the fore: 'I shall work every day now to better myself, educating myself; there's still a frightful lot to be done.' After which came a furtive admission of defeat: 'On Saturday Lou will come and visit; but now we've got to do it all without anybody knowing.'

ABSENT A COLD SHOWER, HEINRICH HIMMLER spent his afternoons on the duelling floor, or attending Student Council meetings. He wrote to his parents, he worked out, he took ju-jitsu, he studied diligently. He completed dance-classes too, 'at least to my own satisfaction.' 'I still lack by a long chalk the refinement, the natural superiority of manner, that I would dearly like to command,' he confessed to the diary. He stood for student office, but failed: 'Ambitious, difficult, and excitable,' he chided himself. 'And I talk too much.' He wished he could maintain more of a manly and inscrutable silence.

For three months his diary reflected that curse. 'I'm too warm-hearted' he realised, 'and talk way too much.' 'I cracked a lot of jokes, talked too much, and jeered too much,' he wrote, adding: 'Oh, why can't I stop it!' 'When will I learn not to talk so much?' 'I am a miserable loudmouth,' he wrote, 'I can never keep my mouth shut.' 'I really can't keep my big mouth shut.' 'The bottom line of these last days is: I am just a coiner of phrases and blabbermouth.'

He admitted that not being elected to the student body rankled. 'I've never sucked up to anybody, so I am not really liked. And why not? Because those charming folks whisper all sorts of stuff about my duelling; and because I talk too much.'

He had always regarded student politics, the Apollo, and the associated *Convent* – its voting body – as stepping-stones to higher things. It did not even trouble him that the president of the Apollo was Abraham Offner, a Jew. What rankled was that they would

not make him a *Charge*. That was an important student office; its holder wore a festive finery on special occasions, the *Chargenwichs*. Himmler yearned for a special, superior uniform. 'December 11, 1921: A talk with Aschbauer. Says people don't want to make me a *Charge* as they think that the duelling would not be in safe hands then and that sooner or later my father would prevent me.'

He often talked with Lou – reviewing a kaleidoscopic mix of themes that included adultery, punishment, and how to treat subordinates, and then looking back over these undergraduate years, with the duelling, women, love-tangles, and then forward to his own future. Heini's college studies and his work with livestock had started to shape his own opinions for life. Thanks to his study of Gruber, he had opinions on procreation, sterilisation, abortion, and he had his own views on the relationship of the individual to the state. Lou's *liberal* views had begun to irritate. 'Lou's position is too lax,' he found.

Once, they attended a reunion of the 11th Infantry Regiment, in which Himmler had signed on as an officer cadet four years before (on December 23, 1917). Heini noted the decent way these elders and betters spoke to him. We can readily picture the scene, as they settled down to beer and cigarettes and talked politics until one a.m. 'A lively discussion on economics and banking, most interesting,' he recorded an hour or two later. 'Speculating with money is very tempting, perhaps even necessary, but *morally* – is it proper? I've often talked with Lou about this. I want to get to know the private sector better.'

HE WAS FINDING FAMILY LIFE INCREASINGLY empty. The Catholic church no longer fulfilled his needs, and his older brother's inane flirting with Paula Stölzle was getting on his nerves, 'just empty chatter, laughter, wisecracks and nothing else. They call me a bundle of fun. To them I'm a great guy who's always joking and takes care of everything. Good ol' Heini – he'll manage. I like both, but there's no common ground on an intellectual or spiritual character-level.'

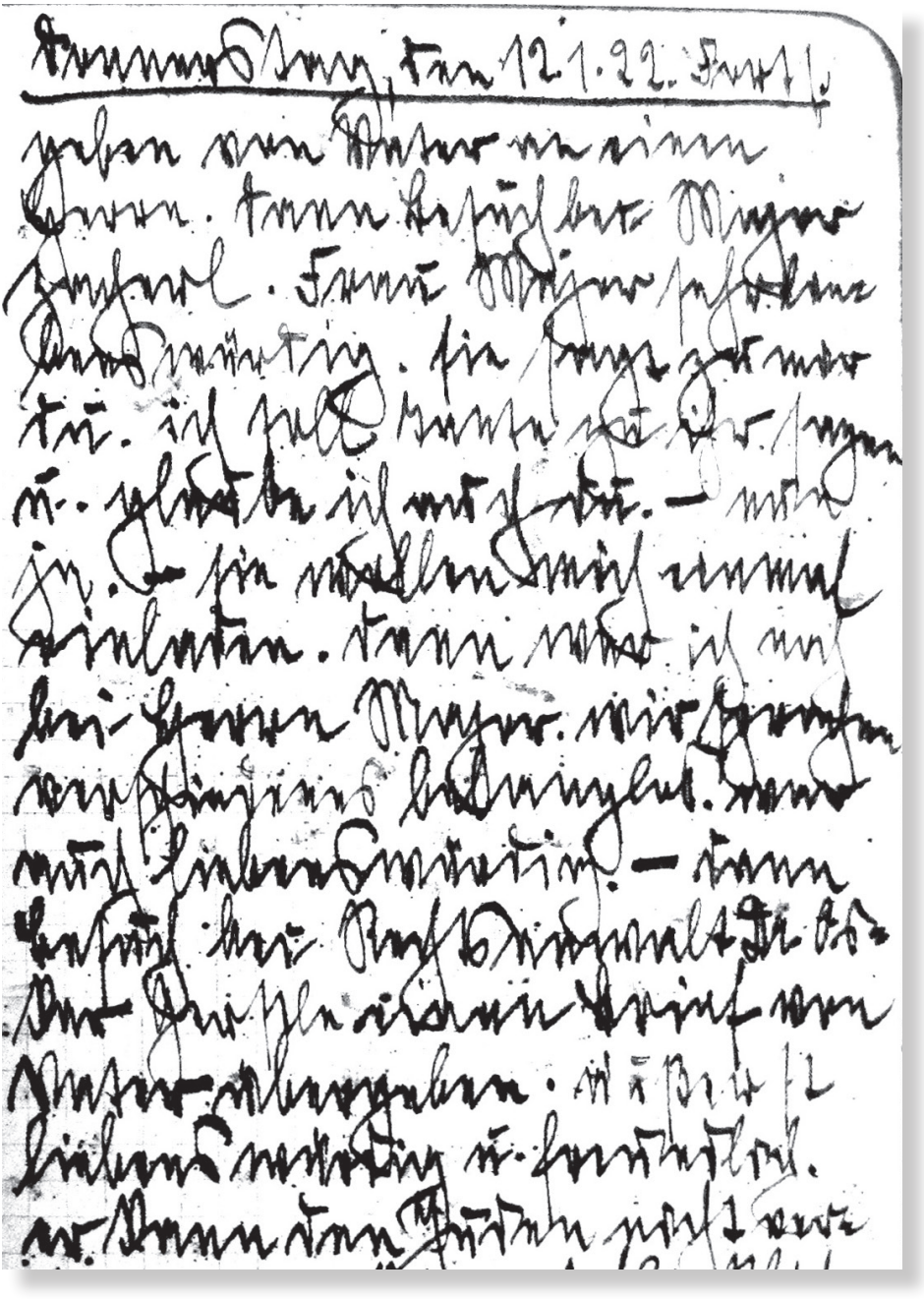
He showed a developing interest in international affairs. One November day in 1921 he heard an army general speak at a German Officers' League beer evening in the Hofbräu. It was Count Rüdiger von der Goltz: he had had a dramatic career, even after the armistice

of 1918, continuing the fight in Finland and freeing Helsinki from the Bolshevik Russian forces, and then fighting on in Latvia, liberating Riga in 1919; he had been about to launch a general offensive against St Petersburg, hoping to overthrow Bolshevik rule in Russia, when the British intervened and demanded that he leave Latvia. Himmler listened spellbound to his talk: 'Highly interesting and uplifting. A truly German general. . . Just see what this wretched revolution and the revolutionary governments destroyed. If there's ever another campaign in the East I'll be there. The West is dying on its feet. We must fight in the east, and resettle it.' To Heinrich Himmler it was all still just words, but one day it might come true.

The spirit of adventure was kindled, but so too was his restless, inquiring mind. Later that same day we find him reading a book by Hans Paasche – and Paasche was the very opposite of General von der Goltz: he was a pacifist and liberal, a fierce critic of German colonial policy and an advocate of humanitarian treatment of the African natives. He had agitated since the war for female suffrage, animal rights, and vegetarianism, and campaigned against alcohol in the armed forces, and for fraternisation between officers and men. A thorn in the flesh of Germany's right wing, Paasche had been shot dead by Free-Corps hitmen in front of his children in May 1920.

Heinrich Himmler began now to list his reading, and sometimes he added comments on books' content. He picked up two volumes of *Illustrierte Völkerkunde* – Anthropology Illustrated, a publication rather like *National Geographic* magazine, with all the world's regions and races pictured in illustrations. One was of a Sioux chieftain named Black Rock, 'He-asapa,' clutching his sword and shield and decked out in full finery of buffalo-skin, ermine, and a head-dress of eagle feathers. Yes, sometimes uniforms did make the man.

EVEN WHILE HE WAS LEAFING through those two volumes, the cast of men who would populate this, the second half of his life, began to assemble. It was January 26, 1922. Over drinks at the *Schützenverein*, a shooting-club, in the Arzberger Keller beerhall, he ran into his former company commander Major Angerer, who introduced a slightly overweight army captain, his face disfigured with bullet-scars



A page of Himmler's diary, January 12, 1922 – meeting with the lawyer, Dr Oskar Gerstle.

received on the Western Front. This was Ernst Röhm. Although only thirty-five, he was an impressive army officer. He had taken part in the overthrow of the short-lived Soviet Republic in Munich in 1919; the following year he had joined the new German Workers' Party with membership No. 623 (the numbering started at five hundred).

With young Himmler, he had a discussion on Bolshevism and the future. Röhm was currently collecting machine guns and weapons for various paramilitary bodies, on which activity the military authorities turned a blind eye; after the kind of internecine squabbling which characterizes such bodies, he had formed a breakaway paramilitary group in Munich, the *Reichsflagge* – the National Flag. Himmler listened with only half an ear.

Himmler's future was in farming and his knowledge there was prodigious. Röhm was homosexual. The talk about him had begun before the war, about his clothes, and the cap he wore with the *divinely* blue shirt; one of his closest associates said he was a quarter-Jew. A few months later Röhm talked Heini into joining his movement.

THERE WAS STILL SOMETHING ill-defined and aimless about Himmler's patriotism. 'Our time will come, when Germany is great again,' he wrote, after he strolled home with Ludwig, and talked with him 'about my future, the future of the Fatherland – all the bitter things coming our way.'

In this last year of his formal studies he took up physics as well as animal nutrition and breeding – a particular interest of his – and forestry: 'How puny we human beings are,' he exclaimed, and then again the next day: 'How insecure and trivial our existence is. Devastating. Origin of the Species.' His health was improved – Dr Quenstedt said he was no longer concerned about the enlarged heart.

One Sunday morning Heinrich attended a military service at church. He had no interest in music, but there was something thrilling about military bands, uniforms, and the oompah-oompah *Präsentiermarsch* to which well-drilled troops paraded. Once he scribbled a diary entry, 'The military goes past, and Oh my God!'

THERE HAD BEEN IN THE DIARY PAGES LITTLE mention of Jews, or of

that perennially unresolved European problem, the *Judenfrage*. The Jews were still only blurs in his vision; but the stereotype had already formed within his perception: they had arrived from the east and settled all over and sucked the blood out of their host countries. On January 12, 1922, he had to run an errand to a Jewish lawyer for his father, *Oberstudiendirektor* Gebhard Himmler,: 'I pay a visit to the attorney Dr Oskar Gerstle, to hand him a letter from Papa. Totally amiable and extremely friendly, but he can't conceal the Jew within. When all is said and done he may well be a jolly good fellow, but that's how they are, these people. It's in their blood. He spoke a lot about society, people he knows, and networking. At the end he said, if he could ever be of service to me, he'd be more than happy, "I've got a lot of fraternity friends." But, even so.' Himmler concluded with a sly dig: 'He wasn't in the war, incidentally — because of heart problems.'

YES, THE JEWS. HISTORY IS ABOUT PEOPLE, but it almost loses sight of this Munich lawyer, Dr Gerstle. He was twenty-eight when young Heinrich Himmler called on him with his father's letter. The years passed, and despite the difficulties as times changed, he continued to practice law. To protect him from persecution, Himmler's father, by then long retired from the Wittelsbach *Gymnasium*, wrote him a covering letter before he died in 1936; as did Abbot Alban Schachleiter OSB, a Benedictine monk close to the National Socialist revolution.

Things came to a head. In 1938 Munich's Jewish lawyers were notified that they could no longer practice after November. The testimonials did not help. Gerstle was one of the thousands of Jews rounded up on November 10, 1938 as a collective punishment for the Jewish murder of a German diplomat in Paris. Released from Dachau two months later, he vainly sought permission to leave for Britain.

The reader is afforded a final glimpse of Oskar Gerstle. The year is 1942. It is April 4, at Munich's central railroad station, and he is struggling with his baggage to board a slam-door passenger train. He is named on the list for the second transport of Jews being deported from the Bavarian capital – bound for the Piaski ghetto near Lublin in occupied Poland. He is never seen again.

7: Good and Bad People Everywhere

DURING THESE SAME months that Heinrich Himmler was penning anxious letters to his parents about laundry, pocket-money, exams, and student life, a movement was swelling in the beerhalls and alleys all around him. A new nationalism had begun to trigger tidal waves of increasing magnitude that swept across Bavaria. Its leader, an Austrian of unusual talents, had settled into this city: an agitator, a disaffected ex-soldier, and an orator.

A little older than thirty at this time, Adolf Hitler had been born to a customs official's family, a short bike-ride from where young Himmler was later harvesting Farmer Rehrl's potato crops in Germany. A dozen years older, and the opposite of this feather-bedded college-lad, Hitler had quaffed no student beer, fought no sabre duels, and worn no *couleur* or student regalia. He was a rough, unpolished diamond who had seen war as an infantry corporal on the Western Front, and been blinded by a British gas attack; returning with the Iron Cross, he had ended the war in a military hospital outside Berlin.

Staying in the army, if not in uniform, he had fought against the extreme Left, acting as an infiltrator and informer. Hitler had briefly supported the Bavarian 'Soviet Republic' and donned its red brassard. Demobilised early in 1919, he continued to work as an informer for the Bavarian authorities, spying on subversives infesting the back

streets and beerhalls of Munich like vermin, and chanced upon an obscure body, the German Workers' Party. He joined a week later.

Historians will argue over when, and why, and indeed whether and for how long, anti-Semitism first seeped into Hitler's veins. He was not anti-Jewish at the time the Great War ended. It was a Jew, Lieutenant Hugo Gutmann, who had recommended Corporal Hitler for the Iron Cross First Class. (Gutmann emigrated in good time to the United States; it was Hitler who charitably refused to cancel his veterans' pension.)

Adolf Hitler spoke for the first time at a public meeting in Munich on October 16, 1919. We have police reports on these earliest speeches, which show that he learned to give the crowds what they wanted to hear. He told of his contempt of the *Diktat* imposed by the victors in June 1919, and of their own government in Berlin and the 'craven and corrupt' German negotiators at Versailles. Just four months later, on February 24, 1920, he addressed his first mass meeting. He launched his new Party as the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the NSDAP, and proclaimed a populist Twenty-Five Point programme to two thousand supporters in the Hofbräuhaus beerhall.

These meetings were not Sunday-school outings. They were marked by drinking and violence. His men used force to dominate the streets and beerhalls. His Party organised squads of brown-shirted toughs to keep order while the 'Führer' – the name given him by an aviator, Rudolf Hess – spoke. In April 1920 Hitler proclaimed to one audience, 'We need a dictator who is a genius, if we are to arise again.'

The new Party was one of National Socialist workers, he said – emphasising its nationalist and patriotic origins: 'We want to be German, and we are going to make war on the Polish-Jewish vermin' – and there, suddenly, was a clue that the poison was within him. He blamed the Jewish pollution of the German people for their defeat. Speaking at Salzburg, on the Austrian side of the frontier, in August 1920 the poison was there again. He outlined two aims: 'Firstly, *Deutschland über alles in der Welt*; and secondly, our Germanic domain extends as far as the German tongue is spoken.' Here, to loud applause, he demanded the extirpation of what he now called 'the Jewish bacillus' from their midst. 'For us,' he cried, 'this

is not a problem to which you can turn a blind eye, one to be solved by minor concessions. . . Don't be misled into thinking you can fight a disease without killing the carrier, without destroying the bacillus. Don't think you can fight racial tuberculosis without taking care to rid the nation of the carrier of that racial tuberculosis.'

That went down well. During other speeches in 1920 he demanded that war profiteers and racketeers be hanged; he concentrated his venom on the *Ostjuden*, the 'eastern yids' coming from Russia, and the 'Polish-Jewish vermin' who had made a second Jerusalem of Vienna; Austria's brave soldiers had returned to slums, to find half a million *Ostjuden* from Galicia were now living in palatial apartments.

That went down even better, and the police reports show that on August 13 Hitler devoted an entire speech to those he blamed for the war and its outcome. He accused the 'eastern Jews' in the media of systematically dividing and subverting the country. 'We do not want to whip up a pogrom-atmosphere,' he was careful to say, encouraged by the storms of applause. 'But we must be fired with a remorseless determination to grasp this evil at its roots and exterminate it, root and branch.' A few weeks later he repeated, 'We cannot skirt round the Jewish Question. It has got to be solved.'

Hitler would be swept forward on the crest of a popular wave over the next fifteen years to reach the pinnacles of his power and fame. Just as he had once sworn to a friend, as a child on a hilltop outside Linz, he restored to Germany her national pride and lost territories. Hitler seized opportunities and took risks. In 1938 *Time* magazine named him Man of the Year. That year his achievements would inspire nearly fifty million Germans and Austrians to mark "Yes!" after his name on the ballot conducted in the aftermath of his greatest triumph, the peaceful union of Germany and Austria.

HIMMLER WOULD LISTEN AND BECOME HIS DISCIPLE and lieutenant. As his power rose and he became the supreme police authority, he began to investigate Hitler's origins and to speculate about the amalgam of madness and genius that surged through his veins.

In August 1942 he instructed the secret state police to make inquiries. We can only guess what Himmler's motive might have been;

knowledge is power. He stamped the police report TOP STATE SECRET. The agents had discovered a retired civil servant named Konrad Pracher in southeastern Austria, who was claiming to be related to Hitler. 'In opposition circles in Graz and St Peter,' ran their report, 'the rumour is circulating that relatives of the Führer are residing there, including a number of imbeciles and mental defectives.' Rumour had it that the Führer had been born Schicklgruber; and that his mother, Klara Schicklgruber, had been married to a Jew called Singer before marrying Hitler's father, the customs official Alois Hitler, who had then – said the rumours – adopted Adolf.

Much of this was false or muddled. It was Adolf's father who was the bastard son of a Maria Anna Schicklgruber. But the Schicklgruber line had demonstrably produced some 'idiot progeny.' A revenue official named Josef Veit, part of the Schicklgruber line, had sired several children and died in Klagenfurt in 1904. Konrad Pracher had become the Veit orphans' legal guardian, and owner of the incriminating family photos and documents. All of the Veit children suffered from tragic mental disabilities. A son had killed himself aged twenty-one in 1920; a daughter Aloisia Veit, two years younger than Hitler, had been confined in an asylum and, reported the dossier nonchalantly, 'had died in Vienna in 1940.' One surviving daughter Josefa was a half-idiot and another, Viktoria, was feeble-minded.

Himmler's men seized the photos and documents 'to prevent their misuse,' and he had the report retyped on a large-print typewriter and sent round to the Hitler.

We do not know what became of the Prachers. The fate of poor Aloisia is known: diagnosed with 'schizophrenic mental instability, helplessness and depression, distraction, hallucinations and delusions,' she spent her short life locked down in a Vienna institution. Its records relate that she was put to sleep in December 1940.

UNREMARKED AT FIRST IN HIMMLER'S DIARY other than by the steadily rising prices, Germany's economic collapse had begun in 1922. Outside the protecting walls of the Munich Polytechnic, the country was sliding into economic ruin. Versailles had imposed harsh

obligations on Germany; her overseas empire had been dismantled, and rich provinces hacked off and fed to her neighbours.

It was banking mismanagement, as in the United States in 2008, rather than defeat which brought about the economic disaster. By February 1920, when the NSDAP was founded, prices had risen to five times the 1918 level. The national bank printed new bank notes, putting fifty percent more money into circulation by 1922. The resulting inflation consumed ancient fortunes like a forest fire. Millions discovered that their life's savings would not buy a postage stamp – while shrewd millionaires, the speculators of whom Heinrich had recently learned, men with foresight and international currency connections, made easy fortunes in real estate. In 1923 hyperinflation began. The national bank could no longer print, or overprint, sheets of bank notes fast enough. By late 1923 it would take 200 *billion* marks to buy one loaf of bread. Devalued and discouraged, the Germans not always unjustly blamed the Jews.

SUCH WAS THE WORSENING ECONOMIC CLIMATE, but Himmler barely noticed. He had other preoccupations. There is no echo in his writings of the rise of the NSDAP, which filled pages in the Munich press. Early in 1922 he visited a relative in a hospital in Schwabing, a northern borough, and found him weak from pneumonia. 'His hands are pale and waxy, his feet bloodless and thin. He gets daily morphine, camphor, and caffeine injections. His voice is but a whisper. . . His sister is there, she nurses him with touching love and devotion, and can only weep. That's how these girls are. They can throw themselves wholeheartedly into bodily lust, but they are also capable of this exemplary full-bodied love too.'

He walked home with Ludwig: 'Stood in Lou's porch for some time talking until eleven p.m. about all things sexual between man and woman: and about celibacy, and whether it's really feasible.' After which, these two friends swapped views on a well-known 1911 work, *The Iris of India* – one of seven short stories by Hermann Sudermann, written in the gushing style of Émile Zola and Honoré de Balzac.

The cobbled streets of Munich teemed with army veterans and paramilitaries. Uniforms were everywhere. But the Polytechnic

student Himmler's enthusiasm for the Apollo was still all-consuming. *Mensur* bouts clutter his diaries. One afternoon in January 1922 he recorded a *Reinigungspartie* (a rehabilitation bout, which follows one deemed unsatisfactory): 'Horazek stood his ground magnificently and fought well, a satisfaction bout. Now he can take his leave with honour. Privately I am sorry for him, but right is right. Holzapfel slashed, got bloodied seven times.'

Himmler hoped he would have his own big bout soon, probably against one Kiermeier, a giant of a guy. 'The other possible opponent is just as tall.' The fight was provisionally set down for March: 'One keeps thinking, if only there were a war now, with fighting, marching forth. – I am looking forward to my *Mensur*.'

His hopes were temporarily dashed. 'There's probably not going to be a *Mensur*,' he recorded on the twenty-second. 'Duelling-floor, five to six p.m. Still by no means certain I will get that match.'

A few days later he met a student from the Alemannia. 'I have agreed to a bout with him next term. That makes two already.'

If only it weren't for his delicate constitution. In mid-February he wrote, 'stomach rotten, like a dog,' and again on March 2, after an end-of-term dinner at the *Kneipe*: 'I had to down a whole glass of beer. Hugo the new *Senior* [the principal *Charge*] doesn't know that I am [medically] excused beer. Home at two. Beer went to my head.'

HIMMLER HAD ONE MORE TERM at the Polytechnic before his Finals. After supper one evening in January 1922 we chance upon him again 'closely re-reading' Gruber – Professor Max von Gruber's book *Hygiene des Geschlechtslebens*, a popular sex study published in 1903, decades before The Kinsey Report. To Himmler, sex was *terra incognita*. He often talked about it with Lou, and confessed as much to his diary, but he still had to take the plunge into its actual practice.

He liked girls provided they kept their distance, but he was still shy, even gauche, when they came closer. After an evening with 'Kätherle' – Lou's girlfriend – who sat on the sofa looking demure in her home-made grey dress, Heini nearly made a move on her, but her mother spoiled things. 'Kätherle was very nice,' he reported in his diary. 'I was able to say things to her, and this time we certainly

drew much closer. . . but Frau Loritz came back from the concert at nine-thirty. It is my idea of the ideal, to talk with a noble woman like today.' His diary catalogues each girl he met on the dance floor, and her looks and character; once he remarked defensively that she might yet turn into something; and more than once he added a warmer reference to an older woman, even: 'I rather liked her mother.'

There is however a foretaste of a coming indecisiveness: 'One notices how much one is thirsting for love, and how hard it is to tie oneself down and to make a choice.' This hunger for affection grew. 'I am in such an odd mood,' he summarized in disjointed notes around this time: 'Melancholy, yearning for love. Expectant for the future, but wanting to be free because of abroad, and because of the coming war, and sorrowing that the past is already just that, the past.' 'A grave, quiet, very good girl,' he wrote about another female hopeful. 'Sure, she has fire within, but she is what one used to call a bluestocking. She does certainly make a very passable sister.' Told that the wife of a certain professor was separated, Heini wrung his hands in grief: 'That's a shame, in the hands of the right man there could be a lot made out of her, but now she will surely go under.'

In January 1922 he had realised that he had forgotten his mother's birthday; he flannelled deftly in his next letter home: 'Let me wish you retrospectively, dearest Mama, the very best from all my heart. Stay well and love us just like always! You mustn't think that I forgot through thoughtlessness or because of Fasching. Oh no, on the contrary I worked right through. I still get my seven hours' sleep a day, so don't go worrying about that!' Still guilty, he ended: 'And don't think it just occurred to me today – it suddenly hit me yesterday evening studying physics.' Having covered thus all bases, he signed himself, 'Your bad boy Heini.'

To his father, who would join him that spring, taking up his post at the Wittelsbach *Gymnasium*, his letters were more masculine – he was well, the workload was heavy but bearable, yesterday there was a dance, he had to invite that Heidi Patin girl – 'devastating' – and then there followed the monthly litany on the soaring price of coffee, beer, and meatloaf. For books he asked for one hundred marks, knowing that his father was least likely to baulk at that. He signed as

'Heinrich,' rather than the 'Heini' that his mother liked.

THE BOOKS which he now bought had more to do with race, anthropology, and politics than with agriculture. He picked up three from Munich's right-wing Lehmann publishing house – Baron Georg Günther Forstner's *The Defeat of Carthage: A Warning to Germany* (after supper one day he read aloud from it and liked its nationalist tones, which 'met with a great response'). He also bought an eleven-page leaflet, *Parliamentarianism and the Representation of the People*, by Paul Tafel, and a little-known brochure by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Race and Nation*.

Chamberlain was a name to conjure with. Born in Britain, he had adopted German citizenship. When Chamberlain died in January 1927, Hitler would be among the mourners at his funeral in Bayreuth. In a thought-provoking 1899 study, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, Chamberlain argued that the Teutonic peoples had spearheaded Western civilization; amongst these peoples, he numbered not only the Germans, Celts, Slavs, Greeks, and Latin peoples but even the Berbers from North Africa, all of whom belonged, he said, to this excellent Aryan race, which had its own origins in a long-lost Proto-Indo-European culture. The Germans liked to hear this kind of thing, and Chamberlain's book sold a quarter of a million copies.

Himmler absorbed the notion of Aryan supremacy and the existence of an ongoing struggle against the Jews. The brutal Jewish murder of Russia's Tsar and his family in July 1918 is not mentioned. Outside the windows there were political marches, bands, and bloody fighting; but from college he was still sending home laundry and pleading for two hundred marks for his examination fees. Inflation was creeping closer. 'Everything is soaring,' he wrote. 'It is frightful.'

Early in March 1922 Heini lost his temper about some trivial matter and wrote a letter home which was somewhat out of character. He was capable of kind words, but also knew how to dip his pen in vitriol. He had found a bulging envelope from his mother, and allowed himself the wan jest that he had hoped it was wads of cash, but unfortunately it was just an eight-page letter from Gebhard, of which six dealt

with his worries about finding a place to live: 'Gebhard must have terrific amount of time on his hands,' Heini rebuked his mother, and he threatened to 'reveal the letters' at the forthcoming engagement Party as 'documents.'

He asked his mother to read them out at their next family meal. 'It is criminal to make a major worry out of such a thing. There are enough worries as it is. Elsa Zahler for instance has suddenly had to be operated on for a stomach problem. That's what I call a worry. Not this.' In her reply, his mother expressed hurt about the 'bulging envelope' remark, and he apologised. Tempers were flaring. He pleaded with his parents for cash: 'Prices are rising horribly.' 'I hope you are all well,' he added, 'and tell Papa it's not good for him to work too much. I take great care not to do so myself,' he added, and we can imagine the jovial grin appearing. 'We'll talk about that room.'

THE JEWS NOW BULKED larger in his comments. His references to them were still only few, but he already saw them as below some line of social acceptability, as *infra dignitatem*, along with homosexuals; he already regarded all humanity as just an interesting but different kind of livestock. In February 1922, a few days after Himmler visited that Munich lawyer Dr Gerstle, he used the word *Judenfrage*, the 'Jewish Question,' again; and perhaps in that context he talked with his cousin Ludwig Zahler, who was now working in a bank, about capitalism and 'money power.' A few days later, after discussing physics with a fellow student, he progressed seamlessly to 'land reform, degeneracy, homosexuality, and the *Judenfrage*' – all entered in one breath, so to speak, or without replenishing his pen.

Yes, the homosexuals. The student lent Heini a book by a Berlin author, Hans Blüher, whom Himmler apostrophised at once as 'the Apostle of the H's.' There is little doubt as to the abbreviation, as the book's title was *The Role of the Erotic in Male Society*. 'I browsed in the book,' he admitted cautiously, in a diary passage that needs thoughtful translation. 'It is deeply disturbing and exciting.'

Like many young men marinated in the strict Catholicism of his era Himmler was sexually repressed, but his writings betray no sign of even a transient homosexuality. On the last day of February, 1922, he

went with Ludwig to another masked Party at the Loritz's. Lou's girl Käthe went as a geisha, while Heini chose to dress up as an Apache – the plates in *Anthropology Illustrated* having struck his fancy. 'I stuck to wine,' he told his diary. 'But it's horrifying how hot (*heiss*) one gets at these things. Take Mariele for instance' – probably Mariele Rauschmayer. 'It's not really her fault. But you can't help feeling sorry for these girls. You've just got to keep yourself in check.'

Early in March 1922 he took a dangerous step for a young Catholic, visiting the Tabarin, a sleazy club in the Luitpold Hotel, with his *roué* friend Alphons. 'Alphons knows a dancer there, Fiffi Orla, from Nuremberg. A highly respectable young girl with a mother living in Frankfurt, evidently from a well-to-do family of artists. Dancing is the art in which she lets her hair down. Everything in the very best of taste. Chatted freely with her about the dancers and costumes. She's not upset by frank talk. She's about eighteen. A delightful and charming little person, unaffected and good. She lets Alphons fondle her, though without return. Only at the end does she give him a kiss at the house exit. As she puts it: "There are good and bad people everywhere and you can still behave." It would be a crying shame if this girl fell into wrong hands. With Alphons, she's okay. But once –'

But here the diary passage ends, as pages have been torn out, and replaced with some on which he had marked in March three dates with a red cross, and had even embellished the following Sunday, the nineteenth, with three red crosses, again with no explanation.

As he prepared to go home to Ingolstadt for the Easter vacation, guilt swept over Heini. 'I talked with Alphons about last night,' he recorded. 'A terrible feeling of dissatisfaction and of self-disgust.' Invited to stay a few days at Farmer Rehrl's in Fridolfing, he poured out his heart about the cabaret. The old man told him not to worry.

The naked female form disturbed Heini. Staying at Apfeldorf in May 1922, an ancient hamlet on the River Lech, he was shocked to see his cousin Hugo Höfl and flirtatious wife Friedl let their little Irmgard – later Irmgard Klingshirn – romp around in the nude. 'I do not believe this to be right at the age of three, when a child should be taught modesty,' Himmler harrumphed in his diary. He mentioned that he himself did not screw around, *poussieren*. Friedl mocked him

with the word 'eunuch.' Unapologetic, he explained to himself that there were two sorts of people in life – 'the broody, stern' sort among which he included himself; and the womanizer who, whether married or single, was forever 'screwing around, kissing, copulating, without ever finding anything deeper within, because it's human nature and okay by him.' The Rhinelanders, the Austrians, and for that matter this doctor and his wife – they were fundamentally decent, but he would not become like them, no matter how strong the temptation.

HE PROFESSED TO BE UNMOVED by paintings of the female nude. One morning in 1919, he had gone to Munich's Glass Palace; it housed the annual exhibition of contemporary art. 'Pretty average and near-the-knuckle stuff,' was his verdict. In 1922 he paid another visit to the exhibition. The works had changed, but not his opinions. 'Just naked flesh in the ugliest works of art, and the other stuff not better; one doesn't exactly gain a sublime view of the status of our art, although,' he conceded, 'there were a few really beautiful items there.'

There was still something distinct about Himmler's approach to women: less than terror, but greater than just awe or respect. The waitress, the night-club dancer, the cabaret girl – in his fantasy he was always the white knight, galloping to the rescue of a lost soul.

If we can jog the calendar forward to March 1942, we find him ordering that while police might need to investigate whether sex had taken place, any interrogation of those involved was to penetrate no deeper than that – particularly as to its manner and circumstances. 'I consider it unworthy,' ruled Himmler, 'to put such questions to women or girls. They indicate a weird mentality in the questioner.'

Four months after that we shall find him visiting Oświęçim, a camp in Upper Silesia, to which the new rulers have once again assigned its old German name, Auschwitz. The deputy commandant is Hans Aumeier. As Himmler inspects the establishment, he passes women in convict uniforms. Aumeier sneers out loud about these '*Mistbienen*,' using his own pet term for the females: dung-beetles. If he expects approval he is wrong. Himmler rounds on him, and gives him a public dressing down which neither Aumeier nor his men will ever forget.

8: *The Duel*

HEINRICH HIMMLER FACED his ultimate student ordeal, the duel, in June 1922. He had taken exams in physics, plant- and animal nutrition, and dairy technology, in March, and would sit his Finals in July. Farming was clearly still his only future.

His father was now at the pinnacle of his career, headmaster at the famed Wittelsbach Gymnasium. They often supped together, and sometimes Gebhard and his pretty fiancée Paula Stölzle came too. 'Papa came for tea at four p.m. on Sunday,' Heini wrote his mother on May 9, 1922. 'Then we went for a stroll through the Hofgarten and the English Gardens. . . Papa has already settled in, he goes for regular walks and is not overdoing things.' He asked little 'Ernstl,' to get a copy of the local Ingolstadt paper with their father's 'Nachruf' (evidently meaning his valedictory rather than obituary.)

Weekending in Apfeldorf, Heini picked Lady's Slipper, a species of orchid, as a gift for his father. Before returning to Munich, laden with Dr Höfl's rifle (it needed repairing) and boxes of eggs and flowers, he strolled over the bridge across the River Lech to the mediæval fortress of Landsberg with its two semi-circular towers. (Here the American enemy a quarter-century later would hang Karl Gebhardt and many of Heini's private staff.) Heini lingered in the fine baroque

churches for a while, he had coffee in the seventeenth-century Hotel Goggl, and walked back to the station. His father met him at Munich station. Heini found him more irascible than for a long time. 'That's going to be just dandy if we're always together now,' he groaned in his diary, but the storm soon passed: 'To the Augustiner, where we had a great conversation and shared our thoughts on everything.'

In these final months at the Polytechnic he became more active in Student Council (Asta) affairs. He often communed with the Apollo fraternity brothers, and with the *Alte Herren* or philisters – former members who had since prospered in the outside world, visiting those in hospital – and picking their brains about women and the Soldiers Councils – and about homosexuals, Jews and junk sales. Once we find him pondering on human weakness, still his overriding worry as a young man: 'One has to be cautious and prudent, but not cowardly either. You have to be upright, honest, decent and true; dreading naught; and that is not easy.'

THE FUTURE WAS STILL AN UNWRITTEN page for Heinrich Himmler. He cast wistful glances at soldiers and uniforms, and twice that month he chatted with a lieutenant of his old 20th Infantry Regiment about military movements and postings, and the officer-class in general. 'Who knows, perhaps I will go back to them. I am really curious to know what will become of me.' Talking with him again that Sunday after cathedral with Alphons and Lou's father, Heini mused: 'Perhaps I'll join up again, one way or other. Deep down I am after all a soldier. But first I'll finish my exams.' They were less than a month away.

He would soon be twenty-two, and there seemed to be only one career ahead, in farming – and in nationalism too perhaps. He had recently discovered his Uncle Ernst Fischer, and found him to be 'a patriot and Catholic, fearless and bold'. Driving back to Munich with him after spending Whitsun with his mother in Ingolstadt, he listened to his aunt reminiscing about agriculture, and the land his uncle had once farmed. They dropped her off at Dachau, a leafy suburb, and picked up a Miss Adele Giggeld of Ingolstadt on her way to music lessons downtown. 'She has a large agricultural interest herself, with a lot of cattle,' Heinrich reflected. 'A straight-up girl, a

bit of a tomboy, but I would say really nice too. One would only have to make the first move.' He pulled himself together. 'I am not one to screw around, however, and I must not commit myself now.'

He and his father supped together in Munich's beerhalls. 'We walked over to the Arzberger Keller,' he wrote. 'We had a good conversation about the fraternity, about life's ever-changing kaleidoscope, about human inadequacies, and how few people there are who are really worthwhile.' In a summer downpour they ducked into a convenient beerhall, The Spade, in Kaufinger Strasse. He saw a crowd at the old City Hall awaiting Germany's sell-out president Friedrich Ebert; not interested in politics even now, Himmler did not bother to embroider this worthless statesman's name with any epithets in his diary.

ONE SUMMER EVENING, he went with his father to a political meeting at the new Circus Krone, a permanent arena seating thousands. This was already a favourite venue of the Adolf Hitler party, and the topic that night, June 14, 1922, was a racial one – 'The Black Outrage on the Rhine.' It was about the French occupation troops rampaging in western Germany. Probably deliberately, and employing race as an instrument of humiliation, the French had stationed forty thousand Negro troops in the Rhineland and Saar, and their efforts had already produced eight hundred mixed-race children.

By 1921 even the most respected newspapers were using language that would invite prosecution in Germany today. A Leipzig newspaper suggested, 'What offends European susceptibilities in the use of Black troops is not their blackness but rather the fact that *savages* are being used to oversee us – a cultured people.' 'The Negro,' agreed a Hamburg daily, '. . . is driven to besmirch defenceless women and girls with his tuberculous and syphilitic stench, wrench them into his stinking apish arms and abuse them in the most unthinkable ways!'

There is no doubt that Himmler was now awakening. Weekending at Apfeldorf he had met the Jakobsens from Norway, and noted with approval that they were 'true Norsemen, solid, calm, big and blond and blue-eyed.' But after this evening at the Circus Krone he returned to his digs singularly unmoved: 'Quite a lot of people there. All screaming for "revenge". Very impressive, but I have been to more

tremendous affairs than this in my time' – functions [*Sachen*] which he had apparently not recorded. Was there now more to him than met the eye? Summarising the subsequent chatter in the Augustiner beerhall Heini, a diarist who was not normally tight-lipped, hinted that it was 'about politics, women, love, and life; and about secrets [*geheime Sachen*], and patriotic activities.' The taciturnity of this reference was remarkable, given that he had recorded virtually every shower, bath, meal, and stroke of his razor until now.

MEANWHILE, SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 1922 had come. This was the day of his formal sabre duel. It was a major rite of passage as a fraternity member. He had quietly worried about it for days. Once accepted in a *pflichtschlagende Verbindung* like the Apollo, a mandatory-duelling fraternity, it was an obligation for life. The duel that all Appolonians had at some time fought was their common bond. Each had been through the same 'terrifying and exhilarating' experience.

The *Mensur* might last forty sets, each perhaps no longer than a few seconds of flashing blades, fast footwork, and ritually stamping feet. There are typically five hits to each set. The 'duelling partner' is always from a different fraternity – in Himmler's case, a Mr Penner from the Alemannia – selected on the basis of equal height, strength, left- or right-handed, *etcetera*. The partners stand at one sabre's length, the actual '*Mensur*,' in parallel line, feet wide apart, with their seconds ducked beneath and between them, ready to halt the set at any irregularity. The partners wear full body-protection below mouth level, with only the upper cheeks permitted as the blades' cruel target. One arm is held behind the back, the other holds the *Schläger*, a straight-bladed sabre, its edge honed to razor sharpness. Flinching, parrying, blocking a hit and stepping back are seen as cowardly – displaying a lack of moral fibre. The duel continues until blood is drawn. Two doctors stand close by.

The *Terz*, or tertia, the blow which drew blood this day bringing the duel to an honourable end, slashed Himmler's right cheek. (It is a basic stroke, as it keeps the opponent's head protected.) He did not flinch, all were agreed on that: 'I had invited Alphons, he quite liked the way it went. The third bout was mine. I wasn't nervous at all, but

stood my ground and technically fought very well. My opponent . . . drew blood with the *Terz*, and I was stood down after set thirteen.' The blade's edge is so sharp that it slices almost without pain.

'Hugo Lechleuthner seconded, said it could have gone to fifty sets. A. H. [*Alter Herr*] Reichl of Passau did my stitches, five needles, one ligature. I truly did not flinch even once. Distl, a good sport and comrade, he held my head,' and Heini listed the names of all his friends who had come to watch his big day. 'I stayed to watch Brunner's bout then went home. Obviously my head was stinging.'

The bloody bandages wrapped his head. His pride in completion of this centuries-old ritual made up for the pain. 'At five I slept an hour, supper, then bed. Didn't sleep too well, as the bandage was hurting.' When he went over to the Wittelsbach, still wrapped in bloody dressings, his father took it in good part. His doctor was less amused and called it reckless folly, but when Heini travelled to Nuremberg a few days later and found every hotel sold out, one phone call to an *A.H.* got him free lodging with a family, and due admiration for his injuries; while another, a doctor, changed the dressings without charge or recrimination. These were the first fruits of fraternity.

His mother, Anna Himmler, was 'horrified' when she saw his bandages. Still living alone in Ingolstadt, she sent him cakes and clean soft collars, and Gebhard enclosed some photos he had taken: 'I find them all excellent apart from those of me,' wrote Heini.

'I biked over to Papa's,' Heinrich wrote on June 26, 'and took him stuff. Papa is desperately sad and cast down. He has an unfortunate habit of taking everything hard and this makes it tough on everybody.'

NUREMBERG WAS ONE of the first big cities outside Munich that he had visited. He got a haircut, then strolled the cobbled streets, craning his still heavily bandaged head to see the ancient buildings – 'castle, torture chamber, most interesting.' He dashed around like any other tourist and lost himself in its eateries like the Bratwurst Glöckl and its attractions like Neptune's fountain and the St Lawrence Church – whose gloomy bells would toll farewell for many of his condemned colleagues in October 1946. 'In the castle and the old inner city,' he wrote, 'you can hear the sigh of that honourable, grand, mighty, and

stolid spirit of the Middle Ages – the spirit of times gone by.'

While in the city, he toured the Farm Show halls packed with tractors and artificial fertilisers, and returned to marvel at the horses. Before getting more of his stitches removed he also paid a fleeting visit to the Germanic Museum ('just to get an overall impression') and saw the works of Albrecht Dürer and its vast collection of Germanic culture from the sixteenth century on. He took to sizing up young women as to their availability. It was an empty exercise, no more. After accompanying a former Oberland Corps comrade to a Mozart concert here in Nuremberg, Heini dropped him off at the railroad station, and walked his girlfriend Maria Holzmann home, boasting in the safety of his diary afterwards: 'I do believe she was up for it.' Not that he was yet minded to find out.

A FEW DAYS AFTER CROSSING THAT DUELLING threshold, the *Mensur*, Germany crossed one too. On Saturday, June 24, 1922 gunmen assassinated the foreign minister Walther Rathenau in Berlin. Reactions were callous. 'Rathenau gunned down,' wrote Himmler that same evening. 'Good thing too.' He did not refer to the statesman's Jewish origins but added, reflecting perhaps the opinion of his father: 'He was a scoundrel, though a competent leader. We'd never have got rid of him otherwise.' It was increasingly the view of Germans. The Kaiser, living in exile in Holland, growled to his physician in February 1920 that 'when he came back' he would stage a pogrom 'rather different and more effective than all those in Galicia.' Prince August-Wilhelm shared his father's views: while serving as an officer in the east, he had developed 'a rising hatred of these beasts,' as he wrote from Białystok in June 1917, having had to hear their daily wailing floating from of a Jewish seminary opposite.

Rathenau had been a marked man for some time. The nationalists saw him as an enemy stooge, like Matthias Erzberger, who had signed the Armistice, and Kurt Eisner, who had promoted Germany's own 'war guilt' in a failed attempt at getting better terms for Bavaria. All were murdered, the newspapers said, by a secret 'Organisation Consul,' set up by a former navy captain, Hermann Ehrhardt, to settle scores with 'traitors' such as these. *The New York Times*

reported from Berlin: 'There is a widespread and intense anti-Semitic sentiment in all parts of Germany which openly condones and even hails Rathenau's murder.'

The fact that Eisner and Rathenau were Jews made the killings acceptable to nationalists. Southern Germany had already spent five centuries expelling Jews: Upper Bavaria had evicted them in 1442, and Lower Bavaria eight years later; Nuremberg in 1499 and Regensburg in 1519; Bavaria had had to expel them all over again in 1553. Berlin announced measures to crack down on the right wing, even to pass a special 'law for the protection of the Republic.'

The socialists were outraged by Rathenau's assassination and there were mass demonstrations in Berlin. 'The majority condemns the murder,' wrote Himmler that Monday the twenty-sixth, seemingly perplexed: 'Rathenau is a martyr. Oh, you purblind people.'

On June 29, arrests were announced. Himmler wrote a puzzling, even cryptic reference to Organisation Consul: 'Rathenau's murderers caught. Organisation C. Dreadful if everything should become known.' What was that dreadful 'everything'? The organisation, or the plans, or more? We should not speculate. It is not impossible that his father the professor was involved. Later that day, Heini fetched him from the railroad station: 'Papa in good spirits, thank goodness' – which probably harks back to the earlier paternal irascibility. They shared a beer in the Augustiner Keller, and then 'exchanged news.' Again Heini provided no further clues. 'At three o'clock I biked over to Papa's,' he wrote. 'Shopping. Got cash. Papa is so good. If only I didn't have to badger him, and could stand on my own feet.'

He talked with Colonel Caspar of the 11th Infantry Regiment about Rathenau and over lunch next day with a Mr Küfner – 'an unpleasant conversation,' as the latter had referred to the statesman as 'such a great man,' and declared that anybody who belonged to a secret organisation deserved the death penalty; whereupon, observed Himmler, 'all the womenfolk of course chimed in.'

RATHENAU WAS SEEN AS CLOSE TO the United States, perhaps too close. The unfortunate statesman had shown a willingness to comply with the victors' reparations demands. With his death, the collapse

of the German currency redoubled. The U.S. dollar, which exchanged for 350 marks that day, cost 670 marks at the end of July and 4,500 at the end of October. On the first day of June Heinrich took his friend Hugo Höfl to buy a summer hat for Hugo's fun-loving wife. It cost 1,400 marks ('Friedl was tickled pink that Hugo splurged so much on her.') He was shocked at the 'horrific' price of sausage-meat. 'Where will it all end?' It cannot have escaped Himmler's attention that agricultural workers were insulated from many of the hardships.

In Bavaria the nationalists had the upper hand. On the evening of June 28 they staged a muscular demonstration against 'The War-Guilt Lie' in the heart of Munich. Heini went to it after supper with Lou and his fellow students. 'It was a fine and dignified ceremony,' he wrote, 'without any violence or rash actions.' He guessed that sixty thousand or more had packed into Königsplatz. 'The Communists planned to break it up, and they were massing in the Hofgarten, but our magnificent state police [*Landespolizei*] held them at bay.' 'A paramilitary lad held up a black-white-and-red flag (the regular police didn't spot it; normally there's three months jail for that).' The multitude sang nationalist songs like *Watch on the Rhine* and the Free Corps' adopted anthem, *O Deutschland hoch in Ehren*.

Lou's girl Käthe Loritz turned up her pretty nose at these right-wing stirrings but Heinrich Himmler and his pals were not discouraged. The Left were on the run. Police Colonel Hermann Schützinger, a Marxist, whined: 'The nationalist parade in Königsplatz went ahead in exemplary good order' – highly regrettable in his eyes. 'The student bodies, military units, and former Home Guard men were rigidly organised into reactionary battalions. Our comrades hung around on three lots, vastly outnumbered. . .'

Unlike Käthe, Himmler's father encouraged his interest in politics. Dining in The Spade, they exchanged banter with the staff – described by Heinrich as 'worthy gentry of the old kind' – about the war, revolution, anti-officer propaganda, the Bavarian 'Soviet' era and liberation, and about more immediate concerns like the Jews, the ruinous meat prices, the rising hardships, and general longing for a monarchy. The Jewish Question pervaded newspaper columns and beerhall meetings throughout Bavaria. The Jews had few defenders:

they were held to have sold out Germany to the enemy: racketeers, swindlers, usurers the lot of them, they alone were profiting from inflation. The merchant banks were all Jewish. Attending that university concilium in Nuremberg, hobnobbing on equal terms with fifteen academics from Munich like Professor Ludwig Kiessling and Baron von Hessberg, the only personality Heini noted among the other delegations was one 'loathsome and pushy fellow with a strongly Jewish manner.'

THIS WAS A MORE NEGATIVE NOTE than his diary entry when he had carried his father's letter to Dr Oskar Gerstle just five months before. Or was it just fashionable stereotyping? He was already opinionated and rather full of himself; as he looked around the other university delegations, he felt proud to be a Bavarian: by comparison, the North Germans were backward, and had the loudest mouths. Science education in Munich was second to none except perhaps the Viennese – whose spirit he also hailed. 'The Austrians,' he found, 'are quiet, warm-blooded, nationalist, and clear-headed people.'

His father, the professor, was encouraging his interest in politics. 'Papa has spoken with Dr Kastl, who shares these views,' wrote Heini, and commented (or perhaps quoted his father as saying): 'A rolling stone, once moving, can trigger a mighty avalanche. Any day now may bring great events.' Dr Hans Kastl was his new physician. 'Went to see Dr Kastl,' he then wrote, 'who has asked for me. I am to collect names for a Reich League to petition for the reintroduction of Black-White-and-Red' – the prohibited Imperial colours.

The Reich League was one of many secret organisations proliferating in Bavaria. Another was the 'Freiweg' Rifle Association, not heard of before or since (although coincidentally with a 'Dr Röhm' signing his membership card as treasurer), and it is surely no coincidence that we find Himmler attending Freiweg's social evening in the Arzberger beerhall on July 5, 1922 to gather signatures – nor perhaps that he closed this diary record at this point, a week or two before his Finals. No other diaries for the following two years have yet been found.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WAS one of those familiar types, an authority

on everything but an expert on nothing. His pals nevertheless came to regard him as something of an oracle, it seems. He gave off an air of wisdom. Apart from Lou Zahler, his other best friend now was Alphons. Almost every day found them smoking, laughing, drinking, and talking. In June they talked yet again about sex, and the military, and then about Fiffi Orla, that dancing girl. Occasionally he mused with Lou about men's *faiblesse* for women. 'How dumb we genuine Aryans are,' he reflected, 'and thank God we are so dumb.'

Alphons showed him an interesting letter, elegant and promising, from a girl of good family – a romantic stereotype that Himmler's fantasy often conjured forth – one Käthe Achternbusch, who seemed to be in love with Alphons. 'Sounds to me like a well-rounded, enthusiastic, and hot-blooded female, but basically a good sort,' Heini remarked. 'He often dated her,' he learned, and helped Alphons to compose a love letter to her. After which exercise, they jointly composed a letter to Fiffi, that other female, who seemed to be drifting ever deeper into 'cabaret backwaters.' Of course, this two-timing behaviour displayed what Heini regarded as a questionable morality: The two girls concerned were neither sluts nor slouches, and the replies the lads got to both letters were, shall we say, uncompromising.

THE GENDER GAP had plagued Himmler since puberty, what with its dance-classes and etiquette and manners; but now he was coming across the important racial divide as well. Since January 1922, when he had written his mild observations about the 'utterly amiable and extremely friendly' lawyer Gerstle, there had begun a seismic shift in Himmler's perception of the Jews. The word 'loathsome' showed that. Almost certainly the murder of Walther Rathenau had helped focus his mind on the Problem and its origins.

On July 3, 1922, we find Himmler visibly in two minds about the Jews, the one hostile, the other less so. Left-wing students were due to stage a meeting that evening (which he would not be attending), protesting at 'the black-white-and-red' – that is, nationalist – 'reign of terror' at the Munich universities. Himmler recorded: 'One of the convenors is Wolfgang Hallgarten, the *Judenbub*, an officer-candidate in 1918 and now a pacifist.' Hallgarten had been a harmless

enough fellow-pupil at the Wilhelm *Gymnasium*; he later became a prominent Marxist historian in the United States. After supper Heini expanded his notes: 'Hallgarten, the *Judenlauser*, is an activist' – *Hauptmacher*, or perhaps 'ringleader.' (*Judenbub* has only a mocking edge, and to translate it as 'Jew-boy' would be misleading; *Judenlauser* is an Austrian and South German word meaning 'Jewish brat.')

Heini's encounters with the Problem were not over for that day. Alphons, now licking his wounds since both Fiffi Orla and Käthe Achterbusch had sent 'outrageous' rebuffs to the carefully crafted letters, took Heini around a couple of bars. They started at the Germania Brettl which was staging a new comedy act. Here the dancer Inge Barco hooked up with them. Alphons, it turned out, had already dated her once or twice in Nuremberg. (A couple of days later she sent Heini her picture, which he filed amongst his 'mementoes.') All three went on afterwards to the Reichsadler bar at No. 32 Herzog-Wilhelm-Strasse. 'High society,' he recorded. 'Many Jews there. She is a quiet girl, simple, not vain or arrogant and,' he added, 'knows the value of good manners. No one would take her for a cabaret dancer.'

Himmler shortly found there was one awkward flaw. 'She is Viennese, but a Jewess. But there's absolutely nothing Jewish about her, at least as far as one can judge.' Heini had already made some remarks to her about Jews before the penny dropped. 'I thought it out of the question that she was one.' He learned moreover, no doubt shocked, that she was no longer 'innocent,' but, he hastened to add, 'she has only given her body out of love.' There was that romantic fantasy-female again: the kind of clue over which psychoanalysts drool. She told him she was cuckoo about Kurt Wetterstein, a student, and was absolutely true to him.

With clattering hooves, the knight in shining armour came galloping up. 'She has a not very nice situation at home,' Himmler wrote. 'She nevertheless sends them money.' In short, he concluded in his diary, she was (Jewess or not) 'a girl who deserves respect, whatever bourgeois opinion might think.' They escorted her back to her pad in Nymphenburger Strasse, and he was in bed by one a.m., because his Finals were just around the corner.

HE BEGAN TO TALK OF STUDYING for another year. The university granted him a place to read political science, but his father talked him out of it: it was time to start earning money. 'Papa does not agree. I should dedicate myself just to science in the coming year.'

He had spent Sunday evening, July 2, with his father. 'We've both got a terrific load of work to do,' he told his mother. They had bought a wicker basket-chair for the Old Man's room. He had seemed tired out and rather depressed, but 'they talked politics.'

Heini took his final examinations on July 24, 1922 in the Polytechnic's main building in Arcis-Strasse. Writing to his 'darling little Mama' that day he reassured her that 'so far as I can see all went well,' then added vaguely, 'The situation is still extremely obscure.'

He sent home a few lines scrawled on a picture postcard, and then a letter to his parents on July 28, repeating: 'All well and good with the exams, so far as I can tell. Tomorrow afternoon I have the *viva voce* in two subjects, the other three oral tests are next week. What I will do afterwards, that I do not know.' Fortunately Frau Loritz had not increased the rent, so he could survive until July 31 – 'I can show you my accounts,' he pleaded, 'It's just that everything is so absurdly expensive.' He asked yet again for money. He wrung his hands with apologies: 'I am so sorry to keep coming at you like this. I hate it. But I've got no choice.'

He received his results on August 5. The university awarded him a diploma in agronomy, with the rating *gut bestanden*, 'passed with distinction' (average 1·7). He had taken his degree in four semesters, in fact, instead of the regulation six. His student years were over.

His mother would soon come back from Ingolstadt and rejoin his father. Heini was pleased for them both. He wrote on August 25: 'My dear Papa, May you soon all be together again here in Munich, so that your carefree bachelor existence is over. And may only good fortune attend you, both in office and elsewhere.'

'This evening,' he added, 'there's a huge demonstration on account of things in Berlin. Obviously, I'll be there.'

9: *Hitler Puts his Cards on the Table*

AFTER HE LEFT THE UNIVERSITY in the summer of 1922 we lose sight of Heinrich Himmler for months at a time. He started a low-paid laboratory job. Armed with that degree as a *Diplom-Landwirt*, roughly a B.Sc. in agriculture, he worked for exactly a year, September 1, 1922 to August 31, 1923, as a laboratory assistant at Nitrogen-Land Ltd. in the Munich suburb of Schleissheim. It was a fertiliser factory with 800 hectares of land. Here he might well have remained the rest of his life, performing titrations at a laboratory bench. He earned praise from the directors when he moved on. Company director Forster wrote him a testimonial: Young Himmler had put his practical and theoretical knowledge at the company's service, and shown a keen interest in various fertilisation trials. 'In him, the company is losing an energetic, amiable young man.'

Expanding on this, Himmler himself wrote in an early resumé: 'I have a very good education in the milling business, as well as in all manner of office work, and am well versed in agricultural bookkeeping. I also have some knowledge of forestry.'

Here at Schleissheim he also had his first taste of business ethics, as he recalled in a letter at the end of 1941. Oswald Pohl sent him a treatise on ecological farming. 'I can well imagine,' Himmler replied scornfully, 'what kind of data the I. G. Farben corporation submitted,

because as a young assistant in a nitrogen factory, some nineteen years ago, I was required to concoct data in which I was supposed to prove that a particular large-scale application of calcium cyanamide would be the best thing for agriculture: which of course I did not do.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER PROBABLY HAD YET to set eyes on Hitler. He had at first barely noticed the drum beat of the Free Corps, the street-battles, and the crackling loudspeakers of the Communists and Hitler's party. He quit the job in Schleissheim. His father berated him for wasting a costly education. The financial collapse had undermined the currency. It was the great leveller: princes became paupers, aristocrats were as poor as the people. Only the Jews had somehow become wealthier, buying up houses, estates, and works of art. The unemployed, penniless masses turned violent. There was the metallic clatter of factory gates being padlocked forever, the murmuring of mass unemployment, and yet more ruinous inflation. Gun fights broke out over food. It was the stuff on which communism fed.

In southern Germany, Munich was the epicentre of this revolutionary turmoil. Like sharks in a water tank, the many parties clashed in the streets – some too small and ephemeral to be worth mention, others larger and more dangerous: the Social Democrats, the Communists, the Bavarian People's Party, and Hitler's National Socialists. The city's newspapers leaned toward one or other of the middle-class parties – the *Münchner Post* backing the Social Democrats while glaring at the NSDAP, which it called the 'Hitler Party'. The National Socialists printed their *Völkischer Beobachter*.

While Himmler began his drab laboratory career, Catholic Bavaria harboured the fantasy of marching on Berlin and overthrowing the Leftist and Jewish regime – 'the November criminals,' as Hitler began calling them, referring to the military defeat of 1918. To achieve this, the regular army would require support from the paramilitary formations of the right wing, of which Hitler's *Sturmabteilung*, the *SA*, was one of the largest. Bavaria secretly connived with these formations, particularly the *Bund Bayern und Reich* (BBR), which emerged in April 1922 from a smaller predecessor run by a civil servant, Otto Pittinger, uniting men of the Oberland League and

smaller bodies. The BBR had weapons caches concealed all over Bavaria. Its chief of staff, Colonel Hermann Kriebel, was '*völkisch,*' or nationalist. Obstinate and ponderous, Kriebel had been a driving force behind the creation of the Home Guard units (*Einwohnerwehr*) after Eisner'sh 'Soviet Republic' of Bavaria was overthrown. Among other criteria, the BBR ruled that Jews could not join, particularly eastern Jewish immigrants. They were seen as troublemakers.

HIMMLER STILL REGARDED Captain Ernst Röhm, the well-funded army officer whom he knew, as the coming man and not the unemployed ex-corporal Hitler. Röhm's party, *Reichsflagge,* had a uniform, a light grey wind-jacket and puttees. It met once a week to train and drill with rifles for the revolutionary battles to come.

Röhm, still officially within the Reichswehr, at first supplied arms and ammunition to the BBR but during 1922 he came to see that the BBR was going nowhere and started backing the National Socialists too. Hitler's Party already had tens of thousands of members. The armed 'storm-troopers' of his brown-shirted *Sturmabteilung* were clamouring for action.

In August Lieutenant Gerhard Rossbach, a Free Corps commander, came to see Hitler in Munich. He was a homosexual desperado who liked to boast that it was he who had turned Röhm. He had built up a powerful private army and organised the targeted killings of many traitors and left-wing figures. His Free Corps had been named and renamed, dissolved and rebuilt many times to thwart each new attempt by the Republic to suppress it. Most recently he had helped defend eastern Upper Silesia from Polish irregulars trying to seize back the territory legally awarded to Germany after a pro-German vote in the 1921 plebiscite; those who had sold out to the Poles were put before improvised firing squads by Rossbach. Visiting Hitler now, Rossbach agreed to set up camouflaged bases in Berlin and northern Germany to await the National Socialist revolution.

ALL THIS COST money. Canvassing likely donors for funds at the end of 1922, Hitler, aged now just thirty-three, approached Eduard Scharrer, part-owner of the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* and a

former consul-general from Stuttgart. They met at Munich's five-star Regina Palace Hotel in Maximilians Platz. Scharrer's secretary took shorthand notes as Scharrer grilled Hitler on his concealed nuggets of ambition – his plans to stage an armed revolution in Bavaria, sweep away the corrupt Berlin regime, and take power himself.

'THE QUESTION IS,' began Hitler, as the stenographic fragments show, 'will it [the revolution] succeed or not? . . . I personally have the blind conviction that it will succeed. Absolute certainty.' 'We began three and half years ago with six men behind us, today three years later I am convinced we'll succeed.' Bavaria, he argued, had no choice now but to strike northwards – to march on Berlin. It was time to face facts: bit by bit, the Communists were taking over all the North's biggest cities. 'The Reds are brilliantly organised,' he admitted. In cities like Frankfurt the security police, already formed the cadres of this coming Red army – 'The bulk of Sipo officers are socialist, Red, Jewish.' Under General von Seeckt the Reichswehr was sound, he said, but limited to 'protecting the Constitution.'

Scharrer interrupted to ask about the balance of power in Bavaria.

Hitler replied smoothly that three-quarters of the Sipo here were on his side, especially the green-uniformed *Landespolizei*, and they could definitely depend on the Reichswehr – essentially, the Seventh Infantry Division under General Otto von Lossow.

Hitler said that the slightest spark might ignite the powder-keg. 'Rathenau's murder was the product of fanatical hotheads. The more you suppress the activities of nationalist groups, the more you force them underground.' He had no confidence in Bavaria's new prime minister Eugen von Knilling. 'They must be willing to advance through blood and charnel-houses,' said Hitler, and he scoffed: 'What we need is not a Knilling the Kindly, but an Ivan the Terrible.' Every week brought thousands of new supporters.

'Do you have the arms?' asked Scharrer.

'I hope we'll be getting the weapons at the appropriate moment,' replied Hitler. He had seventeen hundred 'centuries' already complete, he boasted, using the word *Hundertschaften* – archaic but still used today – to describe his stormtroop legions, 'and with them

on my side there's not a soul that ventures onto the street if I don't say.' Eighteen hundred of Benito Mussolini's men had sufficed to smash the Reds' general strike in Italy in August.

Scharrer's next question brought Hitler round to foreign policy and the balance of power in Europe. 'What kind of state,' he asked, 'do you have in mind then?' 'Civil war first, with a lengthy struggle for supremacy, supported by the one European country with a stake in both France and Germany – and that's Britain.'

'So your interest is in getting together with the British?' 'Yes!'

Britain realised, he said, that if Germany were destroyed, France would rule and Britain would become a third-rate power. So the British would back Germany. As for Italy, he predicted that Germany would need her support if it came to another war between Germany and France, as was likely within the next twenty or thirty years, in his view, and that would require acceding to Benito Mussolini's demands over the disputed South Tyrol region.

'The Andreas Hofer League is pursuing an idiotic policy,' he said, using the word *saudumm*. 'I would not be inclined to shed a drop of German blood over South Tyrol.'

'Do you think,' Scharrer pressed him, 'we'll march against France within the next two or three generations?'

'Methinks sooner,' said Hitler, then reverted to his pet theme, his affection for Britain and her Empire: 'We've got to have something of a free hand in foreign policy, and that's possible only with Britain's help.' Alluding perhaps to the death of Otto von Bismarck, Hitler stated: 'In 1899 I would have formed an alliance with Britain, smashed Russia, and gained a free hand against France. If Germany had been calling the shots, we would never have been at war with Britain.' In short, between them they could have kept France permanently in check. They *had* to reverse their policies towards Britain.

HE TURNED TO RUSSIA. Germany's future lay in the east. 'The destruction of the Russian empire and the distribution of its land and property, which will be settled by Germans.' 'There are vast areas there for us to colonise. But not by way of land reform à la Damaschke. The solution is to smash Russia, and to win land and real

estate for the Germans to settle and cultivate.' After the successful invasion of Russia, Germany could deal with France, show the Allied disarmament commissions the door, and prepare her industries for a new war. 'It could all be done in secrecy,' he suggested, and he mentioned certain work done on a flame-thrower.

As for inflation, Hitler suggested the obvious: 'On the day they stop printing paper money, the devaluation of the mark will stop.' The government was just printing money to make up for its wastefulness – for example overmanning, with three or four men doing a job where one did it before. 'Only a brutal government will get anywhere against this paradise for parasites – a dictator who foregoes all popularity and says: Who cares if I am hated!' They needed another Bismarck.

'How would you break resistance?' asked the consul-general.

'The moment the dictator arrives there will be a general strike,' conceded Hitler. 'But precisely that will enable him to make a clean sweep. The general strike will be broken.' The state must be run along economic lines just like any other business. 'Inflation leads to Bolshevism,' he asserted. 'Because it undermines the incentive to save. That's what the Bolsheviks want. . . Nowadays people aren't saving.'

Scharrer asked the key question: 'When will the time come?'

'The moment the Bolshevik wave breaks,' replied Hitler. 'In my view, we wait for that. Our nationalist strength is growing. The moment our rate of increase tapers off, then – wham! Immaterial who starts first, us or them. The world will proclaim whoever wins is right.'

FOR A FEW MINUTES HITLER LECTURED on the theme of 'smashing interest-bondage.' In the Middle Ages Christians had been forbidden to charge interest – the privilege had been allowed only to Jews. Hitler expressed the view that they should allow interest only where it was beneficial. 'What do the people want?' he asked rhetorically, and answered: 'First, a lord and master . . . Second, a government which is firm but just, not exploiting or suppressing the people but acting for their own good.' He cited the example of Prussia in the Seven Years War: 'The people had to bear huge burdens, but recognised that everything the king did was for their own good.'

Reverting to the need for a dictator in Berlin, he jested: 'For myself, I too would be a republican but only if the German people consisted just of Lower Saxons.' They had the finest Roman blood, they were pure Aryans, and needed no monarch. The way things were however they needed an idol, almost but not quite a monarch – 'I consider a monarchy would be a disaster for Germany. What we need today is a bloodthirsty and ruthless ruler, and I do not think you will find one of those among the present pretenders to the throne.' What Germany needed was an Oliver Cromwell, he said, reverting to English history. The country must however have proper courts too with 'real judges, as the only guarantee for the rule of law.'

AFTER BRIEFLY SKETCHING his own simple origins – his time spent labouring on construction sites, alternating with studies ('a fanatical passion for reading, six hundred books over the last six years') – he reverted to the *Judenfrage*, the Jewish Question. Hitler adduced once again the illustrious example of Frederick the Great: 'He excluded the Jews where they were bound to do harm, but made use of them where they were useable.'

'In our political life,' he continued, 'the Jews are absolutely detrimental. They systematically poison the people. I used to regard anti-Semitism as incredibly brutal, but when I came to regard the Jews not as a religion, I became their deadly enemy. They have no in-born right to rule, as they are bereft of any spark of organisational talent. . . They are born destroyers. They have no culture of their own, no architecture – and architecture is the soul of entire nations that has been cast in stone. They are totally uncreative, negativity incarnate, the voice which always says No. The Jew can't help being that way, but we don't have to stand for it. Other peoples have a soul, but the Jews are just mathematicians.

'That explains why only Jews could found Marxism, as that denies and destroys the very basis of every culture. The Jews calculate that they will create a broad mass of the people without any intelligence whatsoever, people who will be willing tools in their hands. The Jews want a caste-like stratification of the people.

'While an Aryan nation is constantly able to bring forth fresh blood

from its depths, and is forever rejuvenating itself, the Jews try to divide humanity into castes, which will lead only to its slow demise. For proof of the harm caused by the caste system, see ancient Egypt and India. The Catholic church provides the opposite example. . .

'If I remove the head from a people,' he continued, 'and replace it with a different head, the people itself are doomed. That is the inherent danger of the Jewish Question. Already eighty-two percent of the doctors in Berlin are Jews. Where will it all end? Either servitude, or revolution. If the Jews were more honourable, then you could say it's just fate.'

'A solution of the Jewish Question is bound to come. If it can be resolved with common sense, so much the better.'

If not, he predicted, there were two or more possibilities – 'either the Armenian, Levantine, way or a bloody confrontation.' In 1915 the Turks had brutally expelled the Armenians from their country. 'As a human being,' added Hitler, 'I agree with Bismarck, who once said, "Don't expect me to defend your Emancipation Laws. As a man, I would find it shameful to be a soldier having to stand before a Jewish officer; or to be a citizen before a judge of Jewish origin."'

'The warlord,' concluded Hitler in this telling exchange, 'needs a blindly obedient and instinctive mass-following. He has to convince them that they are faced with nothing but outright enemies. Never should we state, "We are not entirely devoid ourselves of guilt for the war." Look at the British! Take a leaf out of the Catholics' book too. Their church totally suppresses the slightest doubts.'

THE CONSUL-GENERAL WROTE a cheque for a million Reichsmarks to Hitler's Party. It was intended to help him to buy arms. Over the next twelve months Hitler tried twice to seize power. Heinrich Himmler climbed aboard the juggernaut for both adventures, clinging to the outer rungs, and saw Hitler fail each time.

10: *Putsch*

WITH MOST OF HITLER'S men we know exactly where they first set eyes on him and when. So far as we know, the person of Adolf Hitler did not rise above Himmler's horizon until the spring of 1923; Karolina Gahr, the wife of Hitler's goldsmith, recalled years later being introduced to Himmler in 1922, 'at a general assembly of the Party'; but not why she would have recalled the nerdy, slightly-built student. They did not meet again until 1933 when her firm began manufacturing the solid-silver Death's Head rings that he awarded his men. Neither at that time nor later did Himmler describe the moment he met Hitler, the man he would later call the 'Messiah of the next thousand years.' Hitler had preened himself since childhood as destined to save Germany. The beerhalls rocked to Hitler's speeches, to mugs thumped on long trestle tables, or flung at opponents too.

During 1923, while Himmler was still working in that fertiliser factory, the cog-wheels of history began to move just as Hitler had predicted. In January 1923 the French occupied the Ruhr, western Germany's coal and steel region. The explosive vapours of sabotage and nationalism drifted across the country. For a while the Reich chancellor Wilhelm Cuno and General Hans von Seeckt, the German chief of the general staff, contemplated a military action to throw the French out; in connivance with Lieutenant-General Otto von Lossow,

commander of Bavaria's Army District (*Wehrkreis*) VII, secret training exercises of the Army began with Hitler's *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the Brownshirts, and Dr Friedrich Weber's Oberland League.

In March 1923 Hitler appointed the war hero Hermann Göring to command the *Sturmabteilung*, and he carefully prised it away from association with Organisation Consul, the OC. Göring also created a guard unit, the *Stabswache*, to provide physical protection for Hitler. These men adopted the metal 'death's-head' badge first worn by Prussia's Hussars under Frederick the Great; many of the 'stormtroopers' spearheading the final offensives on the Western Front in 1918 had worn it.

This elite force was shortly renamed the Hitler *Stosstrupp* (Shocktroop), and his chauffeur Julius Schreck (Party Member No. 53) became their commander. Their habitual meeting place was a beerhall, the Torbräu near the Isar Gate. This *Stosstrupp* unit would become the tiny nucleus of something very much larger.

GENERAL VON LOSSOW WOULD TESTIFY LATER, AT his treason trial, that he was carried away by the well-known suggestive power of Hitler's eloquence; but not everybody fell under Hitler's spell. After Hitler conferred with General von Seeckt, in Berlin on March 11, 1923 the general shuffled his papers and talked evasively. 'We were one in our aim; only our paths were different,' said Lossow later. Seeckt was one of those generals whom Hitler later mocked as 'experts in reasons why things could *not* be done.'

Call it realism, call it cold feet. Short of repudiating Versailles outright and going to war with France, there was nothing Berlin could do. The National Socialists blamed it on the Bolsheviks in Berlin, and what the Party's newspaper the *Völkischer Beobachter* called 'the Jewish hydrocephalus'.

Fringe elements in his Party called for Jews to be interned, and for those resisting to be shot. Scenting these revolutionary fumes drifting northwards from Munich, on March 15, 1923 the State Court in Leipzig, a special body established by the Berlin government with its own preservation in mind, banned the Hitler Party and the *Völkischer Beobachter.*

Still flirting with Hitler, Bavaria refused to comply, and the NSDAP remained unbanned. Put quite simply, Hitler's Party far outnumbered its rivals in Bavaria. The beerhall 'Nazis' debated a new and even more inhospitable resolution, suggesting that 'all German Jews should be taken as hostages and shot' if the French did not leave Germany's Rhineland. Outraged, Berlin ordered Bavaria to arrest the ringleaders; General von Lossow refused to oblige and Berlin suspended him. All of this was very encouraging for Hitler.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WAS COMING TO THE END of his year at the fertiliser factory. Since 1919 he had been a member of the Bavarian People's Party, but in name only. The call of the countryside provided his first stepping stone into nationalist politics: he signed onto Artam League, a body of agricultural workers. Himmler obviously liked the men he met in this circle. They promoted peasant-warrior values – *Blut und Boden*, as the slogan became known: Blood and Soil – with the same fervour as modern farmers campaigning for genetically improved crops and 'organic' harvests. He wrote an essay on peasant policies describing farmers as the backbone of *völkisch* society, whose arch enemy must be the Jewish capitalist who exploited Marxists as their helpmates.

From there it was only a short leap for him into a *Sturmabteilung* battalion being raised by a balding pharmacist in the provincial town of Landshut in Lower Bavaria. The pharmacist was Gregor Strasser. Eight years older than Himmler, he was tall but slightly stooping, with the fleshy features typical of Bavarian country folk; he was brainy and active, and a capable organiser and agitator. Like Hitler, he had fought in the Great War but as an officer, an army lieutenant, awarded both Iron Crosses for bravery; he had fought since then in a Free Corps, the German version of a militia, commanded by Franz Ritter von Epp.

Anxious not to miss out on the marching when it began, Himmler signed up for a slew of overlapping nationalist groupings, some more active than others. In 1922 he had already joined the *Reichsflagge* and on February 15, 1923 he would briefly rejoin the regular army, ready for any call to arms. His father was not happy to see Heini seem to

waste the university degree, when his brother Gebhard was doing so well for himself. Heini moved to Landshut, and joined Strasser. The pharmacist was not initially impressed. 'You'll remain puerile all your life,' Strasser's surviving brother Otto claimed to have heard him say. 'You've got the soul and sensibilities of a butcher.'

ADOLF HITLER DECIDED that May Day 1923, the international workers' holiday, would be as good as any to pick a fight. The Reds would stage their big ceremonies on the Oberwiesenfeld parade ground in northern Munich (now the Olympic Stadium area). With arms promised them by the army, Hitler's men would wade into them, and play the rest by ear. All the paramilitary bodies were alerted for the battle, including Weber's Oberland League, Göring's SA storm-troopers, and the *Reichsflagge*. 'On May 1,' Hitler declared at his trial a year later, 'we tried to call halt in at least one city to the disgrace that allowed the flag of a foreign power, the Soviet hammer-and-sickle, to be paraded around. This was the first time the authorities turned against us. To all intents and purposes they provided protection for the flag which led Germany into ruin at the end of 1918.'

On the day before, April 30, Gregor Strasser announced in his pharmacy: 'Orders have come from Munich. It's on for to-night!' Strasser, with Himmler now acting as his adjutant, had about three thousand men ready to move. Driving by dim lantern light the Landshut battalion set off for Munich late that evening in a convoy of elderly trucks; many carried muskets. Unexpectedly, a column of police vehicles overtook them, also coming from Landshut; still undecided, the police lieutenant (he was Strasser's own brother-in-law) told them affably that he'd be getting final orders in Munich.

Hitler's three forces converged on the planned Munich battlefield around eight a.m. There were finally some twenty thousand men, mostly in field grey, and waited for the regular army to join them; their force would then be complete.

The plan was for the famed army general Erich Ludendorff, hero of the Battle of Tannenberg, to take command; he would prevent the Red demonstration, humiliate the Left, and go on to stage a coup d'état, with Hitler in political command and the paramilitaries

under the military command of Lieutenant-Colonel Kriebel.

Kriebel, Göring, Strasser, and the rest of Hitler's henchmen were all there – but there was no sign of the regular army, the Reichswehr. As Hitler waited in the sun, haranguing his vast and belligerent horde, he began to sweat beneath his helmet.

It was a fiasco. When the Reichswehr did finally arrive, its men were flanked by police units; Captain Ernst Röhm, riding with the Reichswehr, was not about to start any revolution this day. Unimpressed by the former corporal Hitler, Röhm flapped a flabby hand at him. 'The time is not yet ripe,' he said, 'The Government and the Reichswehr are tolerating the Red May-Day demonstrations.'

Hitler stood his ragtag army down. The Left's festival went ahead without incident. General von Lossow refused to release the arms and ammunition he had promised. Hitler accused him of breaking his word. It was black farce, however much Strasser later dismissed it as merely a dress rehearsal. May Day 1923: it was Hitler's Dieppe.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN at about this time, the first months of 1923, that Heinrich Himmler also dabbled with publishing. Arnold Ruge, 42, had just moved to Munich. A nationalist firebrand, he had been banned from teaching in Heidelberg in 1920 for his tirades against the powerful Jewish academics there; he had quit the Oberland League after another row, then joined Rudolf Schäfer's Blücher League.

Together with Himmler he founded, or took over, a minor but grandly named Munich publishing house, Deutsche Verlags-gesellschaft mbH. That is all we know. Soon after, in June 1923, Ruge was committed to Landsberg prison for a year for various offences; a dozen years later, in 1936, Himmler commissioned Ruge as part of the Witchcraft Project to write a tract on the mediæval trials of 'witches.' Ruge's work identified the culprits as the Catholic church acting in collaboration with the Jews. Academics can always be found who are willing to write what best suits their masters. On August 1 it cost three million Reichsmarks to buy one American dollar.

IN BERLIN the regime tottered along. Gustav Stresemann succeeded Wilhelm Cuno on August 12, 1923 and sought rapprochement with

France; he failed. He tried twice more before throwing in the towel.

August 1 was the day that Himmler took another step toward that 1945 room in Lüneburg. He signed onto the growing Party led by Adolf Hitler, the NSDAP – *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*. His membership number was 42,404; still only a minnow among sharks. He had signed up for the Reichswehr on February 15, ready for any call to arms, and on September 15, 1923 he would briefly join 4 Company of the 1st Battalion of 19 Infantry Regiment in Munich. When the roll was called out yonder, he'd be there.

These were not empty gestures on his part. In the provinces of Thuringia and Saxony the Communists had seized control, and this raised the fears in neighbouring Bavaria of a return to a Soviet Republic. Undeterred by the May-Day fiasco, Hitler began plotting more intensively with the so-called Bavarian triumvirate – the Reichswehr and police, and the three leaders, Otto von Lossow, Gustav von Kahr and Hans Ritter von Seisser, to raise an army for a March on Berlin to overthrow the 'Jewish' leadership and seize power, on the model of Mussolini's March on Rome the year before.

On September 1, 1923, the day when Himmler formally quit his job with the fertiliser factory, the right-wing paramilitaries met in Nuremberg and formed a *Deutscher Kampfbund* or 'Fighting Alliance,' with Hitler as their Führer, or political leader. As before, their combined armed forces would come under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Kriebel. He established his headquarters in the Rheinischer Hof hotel close to Munich's main railroad station.

Hitler addressed the heads of this new Alliance on September 25, probably at the Bürgerbräu beerhall. The Bürgerbräu was a centre of political activity; Göring, the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) commander, was a frequent visitor to its private rooms. Röhm, Göring, Strasser, and Weber were probably present. Himmler definitely was, although it is not clear in what capacity.

After listening to a two-and-a-half hour harangue by Hitler, all agreed to put themselves under his political command. This may well have been Himmler's first close-quarters meeting with him. He scrawled a handwritten record, headed '25.9.23.' Other Hitler and Himmler biographers have ignored it, perhaps because of its

challenging script. (He began to head it with the word *Versammlung*, assembly, but that may have seemed too civilian, and he crossed that out and changed it to *Appel*, roll-call.)

Hitler proclaimed that preparations for the Fighting Alliance were complete, and that its aims were to carry the Bavarian nationalist (*völkisch*) freedom-fight beyond the frontiers. Ernst Röhm's *Reichsflagge* and other paramilitary units were rigidly organised, said Hitler; the BBR (*Bund Bayern und Reich*), had agreed to go along with them. Hitler stressed the Alliance's military character and discipline. All its men must display unconditional obedience, and turn up regularly for duty; the junior officers would be appointed by himself as Führer – clearly the Alliance was not intended to be a democratic body, but a top-down military command structure. Himmler noted: 'Specifically sworn by oath to the Führer, it will stand by for direct combat and can be committed to action . . . for example in Munich.'

Describing the position outside Bavaria, Hitler said that the situation of the French-occupied Ruhr region was 'bleak,' with its last assets robbed and its industry and agriculture ruined; in the north there was Bolshevism with 'naked brute force,' and here in the south only spiralling prices. He spoke of the 'uselessness of parliaments and governments,' and asked a rhetorical question that was on many a middle-class lip: 'Who can be our saviour?' The answer which he offered was transcribed by Himmler thus: 'The patriotic units, and esp. the combat-ready units of our fighting formations.'

Himmler's note concluded with these four lines:

> Armed struggle – power.
> Hitler.
> *Völkisch* movement.
> *Grossdeutschland* – Greater Germany.

Two days later, on the twenty-seventh, Hitler declared his intention of holding fourteen mass meetings in Munich. The prime minister Eugen von Knilling declared a state of emergency, and appointed Kahr as Bavarian Commissioner-General, with Colonel Seisser as chief of police and Lossow as commander of the Bavarian army.

This triumvirate would maintain law and order. Three or four days later Kahr began planning military action, with or without Berlin's consent, against the Communists in both Saxony and Thuringia.

With added confidence young Heinrich Himmler moved onto his next stepping-stone, joining Röhm's renamed *Reichs-Kriegsflagge*. His identity card is dated October 17, 1923. Röhm had created this force from four units expelled from the *Reichsflagge*; its commanders were veteran army officers, its rank and file were students and other activists. Himmler found the company congenial; he probably felt the ill-defined, de-personalising thrill of 'belonging' and 'comradeship' that many a growing male feels in joining a group and donning its uniform, be it the Boy Scouts or, as we shall later find, the *Schutzstaffel*.

THE TIME WAS APPROACHING for Hitler to stage a March on Berlin, already discussed with Consul Scharrer at the end of 1922. There is little doubt from later trial records that the new triumvirate was egging Hitler on. Kahr's blue-blooded deputy Baron Friedrich von und zu Aufsess revealed twice in speeches during October that Bavaria's forces would march on Berlin and overthrow the Stresemann regime, with the assistance of Free Corps and Hitler men.

On October 20 Aufsess spelled it out explicitly to university students in Munich: 'What we're saying is not, "Break with Berlin!" We're not separatists. What we say is, "Onward, to Berlin!" For two months we have been betrayed by Berlin in monstrous fashion.' 'What else d'you expect,' he scoffed, 'from a Jewish regime with a mattress-engineer at its head' (President Friedrich Ebert had trained as a saddle-maker).

That same day Kahr removed Bavaria's Reichswehr forces, the Seventh Division, from Berlin's command altogether; and he announced popular steps against the Jews, whom he roundly blamed for the economic crisis. He ordered the expulsion from the city of 'foreign shylocks and racketeers, and especially the eastern yids.' Of these *Ostjuden* around 1,500 had taken up residence in Munich; forty Jews were denounced as 'national pests' and banished forthwith, and their homes were confiscated. In his unpublished memoirs Kahr justified this by claiming that in an emergency 'any and all relief was lawful.' He later deleted this dubious justification.

The Communist threat in the provinces receded; but this did not lessen the Bavarian nationalists' ultimate ambition – regime-change in Berlin. Hitler resumed talks with General von Lossow. He did most of the talking, as the general lamely testified later: 'He would not heed any objections. He was the Appointed Man, and everybody else just had to go along with that.' During October the state police and regular army began training the paramilitaries as allies, as Hitler testified in secret session in the same trial – 'in their barracks, and clad partly in their uniforms too.' Hitler further testified that 'from Day One the training had one purpose only, not just border-patrol or police work, but attack . . . a fast-moving war northwards.' 'This,' he emphasised, 'was why we had no alternative but to act. We couldn't just leave the lads waiting in their barracks, night after night and day after day, thirsting for war. They kept asking: When does the balloon go up? When do we finally get to fight and throw the gangsters out?'

Hitler reassured his men at an operational conference at National Socialist headquarters at No. 39 Schelling Strasse on October 23: 'I am not such an idiot as to go against the army and state police.'

The next day, October 24, events gathered momentum. The army's General von Lossow used a friendlier language than on May 1, when he had thwarted the May Day battle. On the twenty-fifth, Hitler told Bavaria's police chief, Colonel Hans von Seisser, of his plans for regime-change in Berlin; Seisser would take over the national police, he suggested, and Lossow the army. General Ludendorff was with them, he said, and this would neutralise the Reichswehr in the north: there was not one soldier who would open fire on the war hero.

Seisser rose to the bait. On October 27 he confided Hitler's dramatic plans to his own police officers in their Türken-Strasse barracks: 'There is a Jewish regime in Berlin,' he said. 'It is Gustav von Kahr's intent to revive Germany, starting from Bavaria. The Reich government will be overthrown and a directorate of a few national minded men established, equipped with dictatorial powers. Elements of you men, the *Landespolizei*, will stand by forthwith for the March on Berlin.'

There is little doubt that Seisser spoke these words, although he denied it. It all came out in secret session at the trial. On October 28

he issued orders for increased munitions production, and the next day he issued a secret Reichswehr order, No. 3/107, beginning with the words: 'In the event of Internal Unrest within the German Reich. . .' Further secret orders followed. General von Lossow directed Gregor Strasser to provide 150 *Sturmabteilung* men to reinforce the Seventh Division. Hitler testified that the army ordered him to raise secretly – so as not to alert the Entente Powers – a cavalry unit under Captain Prince Wrede (who attended that fund-raising talk with Consul Scharrer in December 1922).

Over lunch a few days later, Göring confirmed to Ernst Röhm that Lossow was *Feuer und Flamme* – gung-ho. 'The balloon's about to go up at last,' he said, 'and Lossow says he's ready to strike at Berlin. But first we've got to present to him the *fait accompli* upon which he can act.' So Röhm would testify *in camera* at the trial.

ALL AT ONCE, GUSTAV VON KAHR got cold feet. Furious at this sudden loss of nerve, Hitler decided to go ahead without him. Descending on Lossow on October 30 and Seisser on November 1, together with Weber of the Oberland League, he told them that he now considered he had a free hand; he could no longer remain neutral one way or the other. 'I will do as I see fit,' he declared, 'and I will show you the way!'

Gustav von Kahr told Seisser to go to Berlin and speak with Seeckt. Seisser did so on November 2, and gave the general private assurances that Bavaria was not about to move against Berlin. Elements in Berlin were planning a regime-change of their own. The double-cross dated from that day, said one of the defence counsel (Dr Alfred Holl) in the resulting treason trial. Dealing with the Fighting Alliance, Kahr prevaricated, claiming to Kriebel and Weber that he was still in favour of regime-change. 'First and foremost is the creation of a nationalist government, we're all agreed on that,' Kahr said. 'The Stresemann regime isn't nationalist, so we have to fight against that right from the start.'

All three, Kahr, Seisser and Lossow, were flatly against attempting a wild putsch. 'This is one insanity we won't be going along with,' said Lossow. This left Hitler no alternative, as he would claim at the trial, but to mount a putsch two days later, on November 8.

IT WAS A SIMPLE PLAN. THEY WOULD stage a mass meeting in the Bürgerbräu beerhall, and invite these three faint-hearted leaders, as speakers. Once they were inside, Hitler would kidnap them at gunpoint, and force them to join him. It might be described as a bold scenario.

November 8, 1923 was therefore the day picked for the putsch, and Heinrich Himmler would have a minor walk-on part. They could not wait a moment longer. To purchase one copy of the *Völkischer Beobachter* now cost eight *thousand million marks* (a copy had cost half of one Reichsmark when Hitler's Party bought the title, back in 1920). Priceless paintings were sold by families just to eat. Just five weeks before the coup, on October 1, 1923, one U.S. dollar had still fetched 241 million Reichsmarks; at the end of October, it was worth 270 *billion*. Berlin was bankrupting Germany; others were profiting.

The eighth was a cold, damp, dark evening, the stars hiding behind a heavy overcast, and the Munich street lamps glistening on the wet cobblestones. Oddly, it was an episode about which Himmler rarely if ever spoke afterwards. Along with hundreds of Ernst Röhm's men, he had gone with Gebhard to another beerhall, the Löwenbräu, for a meeting of the *Reichs-Kriegsflagge* which he had joined three weeks before. Around eight p.m. Lieutenant Wilhelm Brückner, one of Göring's SA commanders, arrived at this beerhall: parts of the first battalion and the entire third battalion were already there. Göring had given Brückner orders that morning to take his SA *Standarte* Munich, to the Löwenbräu and await a call from the Bürgerbräu.

There, a mile away across the river, three thousand Hitler supporters had packed into the beerhall. Kahr, Lossow and Seisser had been invited to a *Vertrauenskundgebung* – a 'Rally of Confidence.' Weber had phoned them at three p.m. and made sure they were coming. There seemed to be an awful lot of young men in Fighting Alliance uniforms. Kahr's press chief had laid on free beer, and the noise was deafening. A few minutes after eight-thirty p.m., with Kahr already droning a prepared speech, there was a growing commotion at the main entrance, and shouts of 'Hitler's coming, Hitler's coming!'

From the podium the speakers could see a wedge of armed men approaching, with Hitler among them, drawing his Browning from

its holster. ('You'll understand,' he said at his trial, 'you couldn't exactly go in wagging a palm frond.') With him were three top supporters, including Göring and Rudolf Hess.

With his left hand Hitler loaded the Browning, and cocked it. Professor Gruber, who wrote the sex manual which Himmler had devoured, was in the audience. He testified: 'Suddenly Hitler was standing right next to me with several armed men – one armed officer in front [his bodyguard Ulrich Graf, who would take several police bullets the next day] and two more behind, all in steel helmets. When I saw him, he had his revolver out, pointing at the ceiling. He was in some excitement and shouting for quiet, because there was uproar. He kept shouting at them – "Silence! Silence!" . . . Finally Hitler fired a pistol shot into the ceiling. That produced silence. He shouted in great excitement that nobody was to move, he had covered all the exits and had six hundred armed men and machine guns around the hall.'

In truth, he had a dozen men. He stopped short of Gustav von Kahr. Kahr would confirm in his testimony: 'The man in front stopped a few paces short of me, lowered his gun, and spoke. I saw that it was Mr Hitler.' 'The national revolution,' Hitler shouted, 'has begun!'

THE REGIME OF THE NOVEMBER CRIMINALS in Berlin, he added referring to 1918, was over, and he would himself take over direction of Germany's new Nationalist Government. It would have its seat of power here in Munich.

'Nobody is to leave,' he shouted hoarsely.

There were cheers, and cries of 'South America!' and 'Mexico!'

Still bluffing, Hitler announced that his men had seized the barracks of the Reichswehr and police. 'Both have rallied to the swastika.'

Kahr walked over to Lossow and Seisser, and murmured: 'A fine mess the police have got us into. Let's see how we get out of this one.'

One of them hissed: 'Put on an act.'

Then, testified Gruber (and Lossow a few days later), Hitler announced: 'I invite Your Excellencies von Kahr, von Lossow and von Seisser to follow me outside. I personally guarantee your safety.'

He adopted a muted tone. Hitler and Kahr shook hands, and

exchanged penetrating stares, Kahr placing his left hand top of the other's. The acting had begun.

Leaving Göring behind appealing for calm, Hitler led the three arrested leaders at gunpoint into a side room which Hess had taken the precaution to hire. (As Winston Churchill once scoffed, Germans could never stage a real revolution because that might involve Walking on the Grass.) Göring assured the audience yet again that nobody was going to get hurt. This was not against Kahr, he said – they were just going to get rid of that Jewish lot in Berlin; as for the Reichswehr, their soldiers were already marching out of their barracks with the old flags flying. Meanwhile, nobody was to move. 'You've got your free beer,' shouted the aviator. 'Drink it.'

For a while Hitler dealt with Kahr. It was at about this time, shortly before nine p.m., that General Ludendorff himself arrived at the Bürgerbräu, looking determined and serious, greeted by loud cheers.

He dealt with the other two leaders, Lossow and Seisser, and appealed to their sense of duty, while Hitler worked on Kahr. 'Von Kahr's face was a mask,' said the historian Dr Alexander von Müller, another professor who was present. 'Lossow seemed indifferent, his whole attitude rather careless, his expression foxy and cynical; Seisser was pale and nervous, the only one of the three to seem involved.'

BACK AT THE Löwenbräu beerhall, Ernst Röhm was waiting with several hundred *Reichs-Kriegsflagge* men, mostly army veterans and nationalist students like Heinrich and Gebhard Himmler. A police detective among them, *Kriminalkommissar* Werner, aged fifty, would testify a few weeks later, 'Captain Röhm arrived, greeted with applause by those present. He said that unfortunately Mr Hitler was not going to be able to speak this evening, and that Mr Esser would be speaking instead.' Hermann Esser, an editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, launched into a two-hour monologue.

Many months later, Gebhard Himmler told Heini of an army lieutenant, one Heinrich Müller, in the Oberland contingent. 'On November 8,' Gebhard recalled, 'he brought over to us in the Löwenbräu orders for a number of men, and they were at once driven over to the Bürgerbräu where they did what they did [*die Sache*].'

Heini did not spell out in his diary what that was. 'Afterwards,' he continued, 'all the orders were collected and burned.'

A phone call came from the Bürgerbräu. It was Lieutenant-Colonel Kriebel, phoning from the beer-hall's kitchen. Kriebel said only two words – *glücklich entbunden*, 'child delivered without problems.' This was the signal for Röhm to seize key buildings. Kriebel had told Weber's Oberland League to seize the telegraph office and railroad station – the latter to ensure that 'this time the whole Jewish scum couldn't get away, catch the evening express trains out north to Berlin, Frankfurt, and so on, and take their hard currency with them.'

Witnesses suggested that when word first reached Röhm of the drama, he seemed startled. 'I don't believe it,' Detective Werner heard him say. 'That can't be right.' He instructed somebody to check. 'Let's be absolutely certain of the state of play there first.'

He did not have long to wait. One of his drivers slipped onto the stage and whispered something. Röhm leapt to his feet. 'Werner,' he said, 'you stay here. We've got confirmation that the old regime has been overthrown and a new one has been formed.'

Shortly, Röhm announced: 'Everybody form up outside on Stiglmaier Platz. We're off to the Bürgerbräu!'

WITH A BAND AT THEIR HEAD THEY MARCHED off, and within a few minutes the Löwenbräu and square outside were empty. With Himmler clutching a large red-white-and-black standard, an Imperial German battle flag, Captain Röhm led his men off toward the Bürgerbräu; but as they reached Brienner Strasse a despatch rider brought more orders, no doubt from Kriebel, to seize the war ministry building on the corner of Schönfeld Strasse and Ludwig Strasse. Röhm's men did so without much difficulty, and all night long his machine guns sprouted from its open windows. He estimated at the trial that he had around two hundred men at the ministry.

Hitler awaited the arrival of more revolutionary legions at the Bürgerbräu. Rossbach, the Free Corps veteran, persuaded the cadets of the infantry school to join Hitler. He issued swastika armbands and flags, and announced: 'A new nationalist government has been formed under Hitler and Ludendorff. The army is on our side. You are

to have the honour to form a special-storm troop for His Excellency General Ludendorff.'

These young men reached the Bürgerbräu around seven a.m. Hitler delivered a speech, telling them of Lossow's treachery, and swore them in on their new leaders.

Nationalist units rampaged around Munich like soccer hooligans, and attacked local Jewish businesses. Hoffmann, Hitler's Intelligence chief, told him about one squad's assault on a Jewish eating place. 'By chance,' testified Hoffmann at the trial, 'the commander of this squad was present, a young lieutenant, a war veteran.

Challenged by Hitler, he said, "I took off my Party badge." "So," said Hitler, "you admit you didn't consider yourself a Party member at the moment you perpetrated this. You are excluded from the Party forthwith and I shall see that you never get into a nationalist fighting unit again.' 'Hitler,' testified Hoffmann, 'consistently condemned these acts of violence and the isolated excesses that occurred.'

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* came out at seven a.m. with the news of Hitler's coup d'état.

There was one puzzle however. Kahr and Lossow could not be reached. Göring directed Brückner to take control of bridges across the Isar. Brückner found a police major already there; he had the same orders – but this time directed against the rebels.

The three Bavarian leaders had done a *volte-face*. At two-fifty a.m. a message had gone to all government radio stations: 'General Commissioner von Kahr, General von Lossow, and Colonel von Seisser have repudiated the Hitler putsch. Statement issued at gunpoint in the Bürgerbräu beerhall meeting is of no validity. Be on alert for any misuse of above names. Signed Kahr, Lossow, Seisser.'

Ten minutes later Kahr had ordered the arrest of renegades in the police presidium, Ernst Pöhner and his deputy, Wilhelm Frick, whose path we shall cross again. At five-thirty a further signal had gone out claiming that all important buildings were in government hands. Three police detectives at the Löwenbräu had managed to report to their superiors, and the police were making sure that Hitler's men could not capture the telegraph office and the telephone exchange.

Things had begun to unravel. Oberland commander Dr Weber visited Röhm at the war ministry. Gebhard Himmler asked how things stood. The answer was one word: 'Bad.'

Lossow learned that four or five companies of Röhm's *Reichs-Kriegsflagge* had occupied the war ministry building in Ludwig Strasse. At 7:40 a.m. he issued orders to the city commandant Major-General Jakob Ritter von Danner to retake the building by force.

Danner hated the 'little corporal' Hitler. He set up his command post at the 19th Infantry Regiment barracks and sent troops into the city centre. As they moved into position the general heard that Hitler was marching into the city at the head of a long column of rebels, and was already at the Marienplatz in the city centre. The army took this to mean that Hitler had mounted an operation against the flank and rear of the army men assembling to encircle Röhm. There were reports of shooting at the Feldherrnhalle.

BY MID MORNING it had become plain to Ludendorff that the putsch had failed, but he was a gentleman: he would not be a scoundrel, he testified, and leave Adolf Hitler to sweat it out alone. 'We decided to march into the city centre,' he said, 'with peaceful banners flying.'

He cried out, '*Wir marschieren*!' Soon the thousands of men, wearing the uniforms of officers, veterans, the *Sturmabteilung*, and the officer-cadets, were moving off, sixteen abreast. The Oberland League formed the right-hand column, Hitler's Party the NSDAP the left; in the vanguard, the SA men, and then the *Stosstrupp* Hitler, marching with rifles slung across their backs. Four paces ahead of the marchers went two tall men carrying the standards: that of the Oberland League escorted by two soldiers with fixed bayonets; that of the NSDAP by two officers with drawn sabres. Immediately behind them, Kriebel, Hitler, Ludendorff (in the centre), Dr Weber, Göring, and half a dozen others.

At the first bridge across the Isar, the Ludwig Bridge, eight or ten police momentarily barred their way and loaded their carbines. The marchers pressed on. If those behind cried, 'Forward!' none before cried, 'Back!' They began to sing the national anthem, and the police downed their rifles and stood aside.

'We drew on through the city,' described Kriebel at the later trial. 'Everywhere there were cheers. On through the City Hall archway. The whole Marienplatz square was black with people, singing patriotic songs. They fell in behind, there were shouts of "Heil!" and then more songs.'

WORD OF Kahr's betrayal of Hitler had spread only slowly. A patriotic student wrote of how she had glimpsed the black-white-and-red Reich flag fluttering from the war ministry building in Ludwig Strasse around ten-thirty that morning where, five years before, the Communists had hoisted their own Red rag, as she called it, and tears sprang into her eyes. She caught sight of the *Reichs-Kriegsflagge* squad in front of the ministry, she described, 'with Heinrich Himmler at its head, the flag in his arms, and you could see how secure the flag looked there, and how proud he was. I went over to him, unable to speak, but with the words of a famous poem welling up within' –

> Be proud my dear Mother,
> be proud: I am bearing the flag!
> be without fear: I am bearing the flag!
> be fond of me: I am bearing the flag!

They shook hands. 'A firmer handshake I have yet to encounter, as I knew we were of the same mind: neither of us able to think of anything these past years but Germany, Germany, Germany!'

She pointed at a machine gun. 'Na, Heinrich, the Reds won't be bothering you much today!'

'No,' he answered, then added unexpectedly. 'But Lossow will.'

Lossow, the war minister? She looked baffled – had Heini gone mad? 'Uh?' she said. 'And Kahr and the Reichswehr, and Seisser?' 'Turned against us, the whole bunch.' She notice the worried looks they were all exchanging. There was shooting, from not far away.

MUNICH HAS ALWAYS liked processions, and this one seemed no different. As Hitler's marchers reached the Residenz Strasse, Kriebel

saw a thin army cordon, but this one too fell aside to right and left.

Things turned uglier as they marched on into Odeonsplatz, the square in front of the Feldherrnhalle: Field Marshals' Hall was a monumental loggia at the southern end of Ludwig Strasse, with statuary and stone lions sculpted nearly a century before. Kriebel saw green-uniformed *Landespolizei* had run across from the Theatiner Church to one side. Roughly a hundred men, they formed up in three lines at the foot of the loggia, rifles at the ready. At this point, testified Hitler rather more vaguely, his men were 'more or less unarmed.' At least they were out-gunned. His own pistol was holstered, Ludendorff had his hands in his pockets. Nobody expected the police to open fire. (Throughout Hitler's entire years in office, it might here be remarked, German police never fired on their fellow citizens.)

The commander of the police detachment was a twenty-seven year old Lieutenant, Baron Michael von Godin. He too was no fan of Hitler; he snatched a carbine from one of his men and prodded one of the standard bearers. A single rifle shot zinged across the square. A broad-shouldered man wearing a swastika armband leapt forward shouting, 'Don't shoot! It's Ludendorff.' He was felled immediately by a police bullet, and dropped between the general and Dr Weber. There was a rattle of carbines. Göring was hit; the man next to Hitler dropped dead, pulling him down too. Godin had probably ordered his men to spare General Ludendorff but pick off ringleaders.

A second salvo rang out from the police line and from armour-plated police cars. One officer stepped forward and at point-blank range finished off an injured man lying on the cobblestones – 'I saw the body kick upwards as the bullets struck,' testified Kriebel. 'And then, and this particularly shook me, I caught sight of two men lying lifeless beneath the standards which they had carried in front.'

The shooting ended: four police officers were dead, and four times as many of Hitler's men. 'The gentlemen – Kahr, Lossow, and Seisser –,' growled General Ludendorff in court, 'lost sight of the great goal: when the great hour struck, it found only little men inside them.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER was elsewhere. He still loitered uneasily with Captain Röhm behind the makeshift barricade thrown up outside

the war ministry in Schönfeld Strasse. The clatter and rumble of the approaching tanks of the Reichswehr and state police brought this little adventure to a swift and humiliating end, though not without shots being fired here too.

At one-thirty p.m., testified Lossow afterwards, General von Danner reported that Ernst Röhm – called upon to surrender – had asked for time to seek orders from Ludendorff. For a while he tried to negotiate an armistice. In his absence 2 Company of the 19th Infantry Regiment killed two of Röhm's *Reichs-Kriegsflagge* men, Martin Faust and Theodor Casella, in a burst of machine gun fire. At two p.m. Röhm gave up the fight, and was taken prisoner.

After having their names taken like hooligans after a football match, the rest were allowed to slip away. Himmler was discharged from the army in disgrace, with effect from the day of the putsch, November 8, 1923.

THERE IS A HAND-TINTED PHOTO in Bavarian state archives showing Himmler with ten of Röhm's desperadoes in the weak morning daylight outside the war ministry building. Himmler, aged twenty-three, is bespectacled and gauche, wearing a peaked cap and uniform of sorts, and standing with the others inside a barbed wire entanglement. The Imperial flag dangles just above him, and he appears to be holding its flagstaff – if the pole has not in fact been later painted in to the photograph. When the photograph is reissued, years later, another plank has been painted onto the barricade. It obscures the face of Ernst Röhm, who is by this time no longer around to protest at these improvements on history.

11: *Sibling Rivalry*

WITH THE FAILURE of the Munich putsch, Heinrich Himmler's immediate prospects collapsed too. His brother Gebhard had a good job; and an attractive fiancée, Paula Stölzle, daughter of a banker's widow. Heini's best friend Lou Zahler worked in a bank. Unemployed, Heini walked the streets of Munich, visiting fraternity brothers, canvassing friends of his father, following contacts at the Bavarian Lloyd (a Danube shipping company). He talked with a visitor from the Caucasus, but learned that prospects there were grim. He tried to make plans about emigrating to Turkey, he even wrote to the Soviet Embassy about entry into the Ukraine, he called in at a well-known pharmacy in Schützen Strasse – 'nothing doing there either,' he wrote.

As he passed the bookstores and art dealers, he gazed through the windows at 'all the wonderful things I can't afford.' Like other workless men, he spent many an afternoon hour in bed, but unlike others he was also studying French, with two hours a week of conversation at the local Berlitz school; he read Houston Stewart Chamberlain, he learned the odes of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, and memorised Goethe's *Faust* too. Once he leafed through some pulp fiction by Friedel Merzenich, *Beach-Basket No.* 57 – after the wicker cabins that dot the summer beaches of Sylt and the Baltic coast. He borrowed

Carl Felix von Schlichtegroll's *Sadist in Priestly Garb*, a banned study of a French girl seduced by Father Jean-Baptiste Girard in 1731 and forced into an abortion. Shocked by the perversions in its pages, Heini devoured this soft-porn 'tale of Jesuits' in a day.

The diary occasionally mentions Hitler. He told a friend of having read 'Hitler's speeches,' but that was all. In fact, Himmler displayed little interest in Hitler's policies. He procured an anthology of seven of Hitler's early speeches. Adolf Viktor von Koerber, a journalist on the *Völkischer Beobachter*, had published it before the failed putsch. 'Hitler,' commented Himmler, 'is truly a great man, and above all a genuine and pure one. His speeches are splendid works of Germandom and Aryanism.' It was hardly the stuff that publishers put on book jackets. In February 1924 he recorded having 'read out loud' from a brochure entitled *Hitler's Life*. 'Naturally,' he recorded after a visit to other friends, 'we chatted about National Socialism.'

Unsurprisingly, the Bavarian government had outlawed the Party and banned its newspaper. Two days after the failed coup, police had located Hitler – at the lakeside home of Ernst 'Putzi' Hanfstaengl in Utting – and arrested him, his right arm in a sling; he had fallen heavily during the police fusillade. With the SA a prohibited organisation, Göring too had fled, injured, into exile in Innsbruck. Röhm was awaiting trial with Dr Weber in Munich's notorious Stadelheim prison. 'Now they've caught Oswald too,' wrote Himmler in February 1924, referring to Karl Osswald, commanding the *Reichskriegsflagge*, 'because he just couldn't stop writing letters.'

They could have deported Hitler back to Austria. His men had killed four police officers. Instead, they turned him over to the local People's Court No. 1, and appointed a benevolent judge, Georg Neithardt, who had treated him indulgently the last time.

AS FOR HIMMLER, HIS NAME does not figure in the trial. His brother Gebhard explains that Heini was very junior at that time. 'He was certainly not in [Röhm's] innermost circle, partly because he wasn't homosexual.' Heini paid no attention to the trial except on February 12, when his diary noted: 'The trial's going splendidly,' perhaps referring to pre-trial testimonies. He purchased a tract by Professor

Karl Rothenbücher on the trial called The Kahr Affair; the author, an expert on constitutional law, concluded that the putschists were traitors. Himmler inscribed his name in several right-wing groupings which are hardly worth the mention, including the Alt-Reichsflagge and the League of German Nationalist Officers, which interestingly also incorporated a swastika in its emblem. Rootless and indecisive, he signed up to the National Socialist Freedom Movement, under the patronage of Ludendorff, which was as close to the now banned NSDAP as a body could legally get.

On the fifteenth he asked for a visitor's permit to see the prisoner Captain Ernst Röhm in Stadelheim. 'I had to wait until twelve-thirty p.m.,' he wrote, 'but got it with no trouble.' He took a newspaper and oranges with him. He and Röhm picked holes in mutual acquaintances like Fritz Schäffer of the BVP, the Catholic Bavarian People's Party: twelve years older than Heinrich, Schäffer too had been in the Apollo. Röhm called him 'the biggest hypocrite and Jesuit in the entire BVP.' (Schäffer would be Bavaria's first prime minister after 1945.) Then they exchanged gossip about officers of the Fighting Alliance. 'He's not lost his sense of humour, and is still the good old Captain Röhm,' recorded Himmler.

Much about Himmler had not changed either. His stomach was still bothering him. He spent three days in bed 'running a temperature with my old stomach problem, which cropped up again suddenly,' and Dr Kastl prescribed a strict diet. 'A curse on my intestines,' moaned Heini in the diary a month later, then crossed it out.

He was still a regular churchgoer. In the cathedral one Sunday he heard a great sermon on 'Why did God create the World?' Fundamental questions like these still exercised him: questions about God, and about the Immaculate Conception. He went to confession, but new monsters now crowded in on his thoughts, like Nordic Blood, the mysteries of sex, and the relationship between man and woman.

He kept a reading-journal, listing when and where he had read the books ('read on railway, Sep. 24, 1924, on rail journey Landshut to Fürstenzell'). He added his private reviews in Gabelsberger shorthand. Book No. 219 is listed as 'Ernest Seton Thompson,' presumably Ernest Thompson Seton, one of the pioneers of the Boy

Scouts of America; and No. 222, Dr Richard Hoffmann's book, *Stark wie der Leu, gläubig und treu* – strong as the lion, faithful and true, 'read at Landshut and on journeys, Oct 7 to Nov 4, 1924.'

THIS DIARY DOES cover one matter which throws light on Himmler's early character. He did what he could to torpedo the relationship-between his older brother and Paula Stölzle. Perhaps he was being genuinely protective; more likely it was sibling rivalry. Gebhard was earning a solid income as an engineer in a local factory. Paula was classy, the daughter of Heini's Aunt Hermine and Ludwig Stölzle, a banker in Weilheim. Gebhard had first met her three years before, and to Heini's dismay, his friend Alphons warned in May 1922 that Gebhard was smitten by her. 'His infatuation with Paula is pure idealism,' Heini told himself, 'and may end too easily in an engagement, although both know it won't work.'

There were helpful rumours that Paula was a girl with a past. Foolishly, Gebhard asked Heini, or accepted his offer, to get to the bottom of it. What he found out was not good. In April 1923 Heini wrote Paula direct, asking her to walk away from his older brother. 'Since you both approached me, and drew me in, I feel obliged to do this.' He launched into a pages-long lecture. 'A man must have certainty from his bride that she herself with no word, no glance, no kiss, no gesture, and no thought will be unfaithful to him, even if for years he is away from her and doesn't see her and they don't hear anything from each other for ages (which in the coming terrible war-years may only too easily come to pass).' This was a test which she *had had to* pass, he emphasised, and in which she had 'failed most shamefully.' In short, Gebhard was too good for her: she was immoral, and she did not control her urges.

In February 1924 aged twenty-three he resumed this brutal campaign. A civil servant he met in the Palace of Justice, Rössner, was said to know more about her than was proper. On the eleventh, Heini approached his parents and insisted that Gebhard break it off. 'Father was very calm and understanding, Mother emotional.' 'We,' so evidently Gebhard was present, 'told them about the Dachau business' with a local artist and then out it came, how Paula had

been too familiar in front of Heini with that 'Mirwald *Bub*' – even addressing him using the familiar *Du* when Gebhard wasn't there.

ONE EVENING AFTER GOING TO BED Heini had a frank talk with his brother – again insisting he break off the engagement. Gebhard would not have it: if she was no longer a virgin (a Weilheim dentist had used her) then so be it – perhaps it was his own fault. She was after all now twenty-four. Shocked that Gebhard just 'shrugged it off,' Heini kept up the campaign, telling their father about Paula's 'episode last year.' Visiting the Höfls, his married friends in Apfeldorf, he raised the matter with them. Hugo Höfl agreed that she was a sexual predator; and Cousin Friedl, no innocent herself, chimed in that Paula had once told her she just lived for sex. 'She is very self-centred,' noted Heini. 'I am sorry for the lass, and one must try to be fair, but that's no reason to let Gebhard get sucked into an unhappy marriage. That's one woman, said Hugo yesterday, where you've got to be on the look-out every day – seeing what she's up to.'

At the end of February 1924, Gebhard capitulated and ended the engagement. Lawsuits might follow. Himmler feared legal complications – less from his Aunt Hermine than from Paula's 'fly and slippery' father, and he wrote on March 12 to Rössner at the Justice Palace explaining that he was putting together a dossier in case it should be needed: 'Please tell me everything you know of Miss Stölzle and her dalliance with your colleague Daffner . . . by return of post, what you have heard and what you can confirm.' Out of his own pocket money, Himmler instructed the Munich detective agency of Max Blüml. We have Blüml's original report to Himmler, and he evidently tailored it to Heini's needs as it does not reveal any serious wrongdoing: Paula lived with her parents, retired bankers, people of standing, though her father was known as a womaniser. 'Some of this has rubbed off on Miss Paula, and her morals are scarcely above reproach.' She had been engaged twice before, had had several affairs, and had invariably made fun of her lovers afterwards. 'A while ago she stayed fourteen days in an artists' colony in Dachau without her fiancé's knowledge,' added the detective, 'and one of the artists there painted her, as she herself tells.'

She was often seen out strolling at night: in other words an altogether immoral female.

There was indeed an artist, that 'Mirwald *Bub*,' Ferdinand Mirwald, a portrait painter of fifty-one, living in Dachau. His descendants own two or three of his portraits entitled 'Paula Stölzle'; one is a chalk sketch dated 1924. It shows a happy girl wrapped in furs, casting a glance at the artist over one shoulder. He has captured the look in her eyes well. It is what men might call a 'knowing look;' she is evidently up for it. Another painting, created after the break-up with Gebhard, captures a hint of sadness. In Dachau, a town later to be burdened with its own legacy by Heinrich Himmler, there is now a street named after the artist Ferdinand Mirwald.

HIS OWN VIEWS on women were still relentlessly romantic: Kätherle Zahler told him the latest about Maja Loritz, Lou's girlfriend, in whom Heini had once been interested. She had since married, although she would never bear her man any children as he was mentally ill. 'A sound standpoint,' concluded Heini loftily, 'but, for those who know Maja, a selfless sacrifice. Now she has buried herself in her business; the truth is that she's deeply unhappy and just deadening her feelings. She didn't get the one she loved, and she married this man with eyes wide open. What a crying shame for such a splendid woman.'

Heinrich Himmler was still of Parsifal-like innocence, a do-gooder. He chatted with Sister Elisabeth, a social worker collecting for fallen women, who had come to see his mother. 'She told me a lot,' he wrote, 'about the senseless behaviour of the police, and the blame that the authorities bear for this state of affairs. . . It is precisely among street girls that again and again you find so much good, and ones who can be saved.' Visiting his country friends the Höfls, he found it quite harmless that little Irmgard, now four years old, hopped into his bed, a tolerance on his part which might nowadays be regarded differently.

HIMMLER WAS NOW manifestly a nationalist or patriot. 'As a soldier and committed supporter of the *völkisch* cause,' he wrote a fellow-conspirator that January 1924, 'I will never in my life run away from danger.' Chatting with the coachman as he headed out from the

country railroad station to Apfeldorf, he had found the man already clued-up about nationalism, and he was happy to fill him in about the recent events in Munich, and to 'talk *völkisch* to him.'

He began to take a close interests in the lays of ancient Germany and the folklore of the Germanic tribes. One day he took the ferry over the Lech with Hugo Höfl to visit ancient Epfach. As Abodiacum, the village and its fortress ruins dated back to Roman times; it was a military base since 14 B.C. guarding the intersection of the Via Claudia and the old Salt Highway, running from Salzburg to Kempten. The Alemanni had twice destroyed the settlement but a Catholic church had been built there around 400 A.D. and rebuilt five hundred years later as St Lorenz. On the way home they talked about God, religion, and doubts ('for example the Immaculate Conception'); and descended into more mundane topics like duelling, blood and honour, and sexual intercourse. Hugo Höfl said he'd dearly like to go to confession, but his doubts about church dogmas were overwhelming. Himmler knew how he felt. He would be a coward though, Hugo added, if at the end of his life he had to send for a priest to take confession. 'That is a most decent position,' thought Himmler, who would be denied that rite in Lüneburg.

WITH HITLER IN JAIL and the Party banned, its supporters were in difficult financial straits. Failure did not impress their contributors. Kurt Lüdecke was one – a wealthy young entrepreneur who had made financial killings in the new Soviet Union. An oligarch of sorts, he wore expensive suits and Gold watches, and spoke fluent American-English; but he was also allegedly a fraudster who preyed on women of a certain age. He was what Germans call a *Hochstapler*. He had been inspired by Hitler's oratory on Munich's Königsplatz after the Rathenau murder in 1922. 'Hitler's appeal to German manhood was like a call to arms,' Lüdecke would write, 'the gospel he preached a sacred truth.' He saw Hitler as another Martin Luther – 'I knew my search was over, I had found myself, my Führer and my goal.'

Lüdecke had brought much money to Hitler since then. From jail, Hitler now wrote asking him to trawl for funds in the United States. Henry Ford received Lüdecke in Detroit on February 1, 1924.

Himmler claimed to have seen through this 'conman' from the start. In 1925, as he became politically more active, he would state that he suspected Lüdecke of being in the pay of international Jewry and a masonic body, the Grand Orient in Paris, and of having been planted as a mole in the *völkisch* movement. In 1933 Lüdecke would fall out with the Party's top brass. He would wind up in custody. He would be freed on March 1, 1934 and sail for New York to make a new life. This was a fortunate decision, in the light of his deadly intimacy with Gregor Strasser and Ernst Röhm and the fate which befell both soon after. In support of an application for U.S. citizenship, Lüdecke wrote a book which he dedicated to those two unfortunates. It has misled many an incautious historian since then.

HIMMLER BEGAN speaking for the *Völkisch* block, a right-wing grouping set up in Bamberg on January 6, 1924. His early speeches required days of drafting. Over the years his technique improved, although he would never become a firebrand orator. The last entries of his diary which survive for 1924 reveal him speaking that February to agricultural workers. He started at Langquaid, an ancient market town at the intersection of two important Roman roads, the Italian Road through Regensburg and Landshut, and the Via Augusta. He took a train there from the Höfls on Saturday, February 23.

The local chairman of the block met him. 'At the inn,' recorded Heinrich, 'I met more *völkisch* people, a vet named Dr Mendler and the innkeeper Zirngiebel and a Farmer Aumer (a bit of a windbag) and a lot of others.' Over snowy roads they drove over to other hamlets like Birnbach, where he was 'made exceptionally welcome.' He met a Mrs Hanauer and wrote approvingly that her family owned 'numerous and uncommonly fine *völkisch* books,' while Mr Hanauer himself was obviously a gentleman of fine character, who strongly reminded him of old Farmer Rehrl.

He was to make his speaking debut the next day, February 24. It was bitterly cold as they drove over to Kelheim, a town near the provincial city of Regensburg. Here the chairman of the block, a local pharmacist, showed him a curious stone let into the wall of his house – 'a stone plaque commemorating the expulsion of the Jews

from Regensburg,' he recorded. 'In Regensburg later on,' he added, 'these had to be taken down at the insistence of the Jews.' Using the brief interregnum after the death of Emperor Maximilian I in 1519 the city had given its unwanted Jewish population two weeks to get out; the Jews had fled to Poland and the Tyrol. The burghers had burned down the ghetto together with its synagogue and yeshiva school, seized holy parchments for use as bookbinding materials, and smashed four thousand gravestones or cemented them into house walls to celebrate this victory. Only a few '*Judensteine*' like this one still remained. Himmler was always learning.

THEY WENT OFF TOGETHER TO THE meeting. The hall was big and crowded. Dr Ottmar Rutz of the BVP, the Bavarian People's Party, delivered the first speech, and Himmler the second: 'I spoke about the subjugation of the workers by market capital forces, and about food hoarding, workers' pay, and what we have to do about it all.' Afterwards Dr Rutz, Mr Hanauer and he drove on to a pub in Saal, where Himmler talked to impoverished farmers and Communists and one 'loathsome heckler' about workers' issues. 'The talks which Rutz and I delivered bordered on National-Bolshevism,' assessed Heinrich. 'Main point, the Jewish Question.' They were all suffering from inflation. The speakers stayed on until three a.m.

He spoke once more, on Monday, February 25, 1924 to simple folk, mostly agricultural labourers. At one-thirty the room had been virtually empty, he boasted, and within an hour it was quite full. He talked for ninety minutes, 'and I think quite well.' He spoke again at the conclusion: 'A buyer for a Jewish hop-dealer came. I believe the farmers ran their fingers over him later' – a Bavarian expression whose meaning is harder to translate than to divine.

WITH THAT ENTRY, Himmler's diary for this period ends. On the following day, the Hitler Treason Trial began in Munich, in a courtroom set up in the former infantry school in Blutenburg Strasse, with maximum publicity for Hitler and his men. The Court allowed him a lot of latitude; he spoke with forcefulness and conviction, as a patriot and statesman of moderation. The Court went into secret

session several times at which – we now know – Gustav von Kahr and his cronies conceded under cross-examination that they had planned an operation against Berlin jointly with Hitler and his paramilitary organisations. On the night after the putsch, it came out, Kahr had said at a meal in the infantry regiment's barracks, 'Hitler and I were both after the same thing. But Hitler jumped the gun.'

The unusually benign judge Dr Georg Neithardt handed down his judgment against Hitler *et al.* on April 1 – All Fool's Day. He sentenced Hitler to the minimum possible, five years' honourable imprisonment in Landsberg fortress, but with the recommendation that he serve only six months; the judgment spoke of his having been motivated 'by a purely patriotic spirit and the most noble and unselfish intent.' (In modern Germany a similar pronouncement in mitigation has earned a judge instant dismissal.) The court did not even order Hitler deported, as the *Republikschutzgesetz*, the Law for the Protection of the Republic enacted in July 1922, required.

Ernst Röhm attracted a suspended sentence and conditional discharge. In April 1924 he was elected to the Berlin Reichstag for the *völkisch* National Socialist Freedom Movement, a NSDAP surrogate; he failed to gain re-election later in the same year. The NSDAP and its private armies were in disarray. On May 17–18, 1924 Röhm took command of the SA brownshirts at a meeting held safely across the Austrian border in Salzburg. All this was, in fact, much against Hitler's wishes, but he was still imprisoned.

POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT ABROAD GIVES A PERSON an unwanted cachet which he might previously have lacked.

Over a year would pass before Hitler was released. True, his confinement had been anything but solitary: friends and supporters flocked to see him in the Landsberg fortress. In his remaining six months of custody he received around five hundred visitors. Sometimes the prison governor Otto Leybold allowed a dozen visits a day (Leybold's son had joined one of the forbidden Free Corps units, which offers a clue to his own sympathies). By the time of Hitler's early release on December 20, 1924, after a year of relatively comfortable custody, his fame went beyond the frontiers of Germany.

There is no record of Heinrich Himmler being among his visitors. Ludendorff went often, which rather disproves William Shirer's agreeable version that the general shunned the Führer for 'cowardice' after the putsch. Röhm visited a score of times, as did Hitler's publisher Max Amann, his driver Julius Schreck, and major benefactors like the wealthy Elsa Bruckmann and Helene (the wife of piano manufacturer Carl Bechstein); and there was Carin Göring too, carrying messages from her fugitive husband. Hermann Göring had fled to Austria and remained in exile for several years.

IN HIS FORTRESS CELL, SURROUNDED BY HIS henchmen and aided by Rudolf Hess, Hitler began to write a book, penning all the passages upon which psychoanalysts would feast: 'The black-haired Jewish boy lurks for hours, satanic joy on his face, waiting for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood. . . He tries by every means to destroy the racial foundations of the peoples he plans to conquer.' Coming from the man who had so recently expelled Lieutenant Hoffmann from the Party for his squad's acts of violence against a Jewish restaurant, such words are harder to attribute to Hitler's authorship, than are the manuscript's prophesies about the Jews and their desired state of Israel: 'It doesn't even enter their heads to build up a Jewish state in Palestine for the purpose of actually *living* there; all they want is a central organisation for their international world swindle, endowed with its own sovereign rights and removed from the intervention of other states: a haven for convicted scoundrels, and a university for budding crooks.'

A couple of years would pass before Himmler troubled to read this outrageous book which Hitler was writing, *Mein Kampf*.

12: *Buys a new Black Cap*

HEINRICH HIMMLER READ PROFUSELY; IN FACT there were some books which he read twice. We know that, because he kept a record of his literary diet too, the number of pages of each book, the dates on which he read it, and his opinions of it too.

As the years pass, the list begins to twinkle palely with ideas which soon become fixed stars in his intellectual constellation – the cultural history of the ancient Germans, the roots of anti-Semitism, and race. As a twenty-year-old he had already read Arthur Dinter's 1917 opus 'The Sin Against Blood' (*Die Sünde wider das Blut*). As Bradley F Smith remarks, the notes indicate that by 1923 or 1924 Himmler was already associating the Jews with immorality, drug-dealing, and pornography, and was developing an interest in Aryan supremacy.

Because Himmler often lined the margins and underscored certain words before he tucked each volume back into his shelves, it is not hard to see the views he had found which buttressed his own. After reading in 1923 a book by the nationalist Theodor Fritsch (1852–1933), entitled, 'False God – the Evidence against Yahweh' (*Der falsche Gott – Beweismaterial gegen Jahwe*, published in Leipzig two years earlier), Himmler wrote of 'recognising this terrible Scourge of God,' meaning the Jewish race, 'which is suffocating us all.' Fritsch claimed that recent researches had proved that Judaism could 'no

longer claim to be a monotheistic religion in the higher sense,' as it denied the existence of one God for all mankind, and recognised only a god which cared solely for the people of Judea and visited naked hatred upon all others.

Himmler took a clinical and detached view of race and human breeding. He regarded as a pioneering work one tract which he read in 1924, issued by a *völkisch* German body, because it persuaded him that it was not impossible 'to restore the breed again.' He had absorbed the works of the eugenicist Hans F K Günther on race, like 'Race Teaching and the Germans' (*Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*) in which the author had written about an *Aufnordung* – roughly, Northernising – of the German people, and about controlled breeding, treating them as eminently practicable ideas. Günther had constructed a league-table of qualities in which Nordic peoples excelled, including discernment, truthfulness, and drive, along with a strong sense of justice, and a controlled sexuality.

To the trained agriculturalist in Himmler these were fascinating ideas. Laying Günther's book aside, he noted: 'Incredible panoply of ideas. The most important thing I have ever read in my entire life.'

As for the same author's 1920 work 'Knight, Death, and the Devil' (*Ritter, Tod und Teufel*), Himmler reading it in 1924 classed it as 'a book that expresses for me everything I have ever thought and felt since I began doing so.' Here he espied the heroes of centuries to come – raging supermen, with heroism in their very bones and bulging sinews, men claiming the inborn right to kill and slash and burn their way to victory. None of these books would figure on a best-seller list today, but those were strenuous and strained times, times of *Sturm und Drang*, and people sought solace and enlightenment in whatever promised to be the elixir of the day.

One other book seems pertinent in the light of what happened later – Professor Felix Dahn's 1876 allegoric novel 'A Struggle for Rome' (*Ein Kampf um Rom*). This provided intellectual ammunition for the emerging nationalist avant-garde who foresaw grim legacies of future ethnic mixing. The 'struggle' portrayed by Dahn was the clash of the cultures between the powerful, pure, and enlightened Teutons descending upon Rome, tall-bodied and fair-haired; and the

stocky, decadent, swarthy southern races which threatened to infect them and 'poison their air' with all that was unclean and corrupt.

HIMMLER HAD EMERGED FROM the 1923 failure unscathed. His mentor, the left-wing Gregor Strasser, was almost equally fortunate. They had been about to lunch on the day after, when Strasser's brother in law Georg Hofler arrived, in full police uniform. 'I've come to arrest you,' said Hofler, and took Strasser away. Himmler, his fork halfway to his lips, was passed over. Tried by a tribunal separate from Hitler's on April 24, 1924, Strasser was released from jail a few days later because he had been elected a member of the Bavarian Parliament, on behalf of the right wing *Völkischer Block* on May 4. That granted him immediate immunity. Democracy had its uses.

With Hitler in jail and his Party banned, in July 1924 Himmler moved back to Landshut, where Strasser would need him as the *völkisch* few began their campaign to enter the Berlin parliament, the Reichstag. Endowed with peasant cunning, Strasser already recognised young Himmler's talent for organising and his obsession with detail and bureaucracy. Strasser hired him as a general factotum, and paid him about 120 marks a month as his personal assistant.

Himmler was twenty-three; he now had a mission. His father the professor cannot have been impressed, but Heinrich knew what he was doing. Strasser rented an office in Nahensteig, a little alley in Landshut's town centre. Heini allowed no girlfriends to distract him. He was diligent, punctual, and dependable. He always did more than was asked of him, with reliability – and loyalty. Strasser appointed Himmler as district manager (*Gaugeschäftsführer*) and then deputy Gauleiter of Lower Bavaria. He became the Gau's SA commander. As if that were not enough, Himmler took a leading position in the Artam League in Bavaria too.

Scattered papers which are now in private hands allow us to follow his trail that year. On August 1, 1924 we find him laboriously typing on the headed notepaper of the *Völkischer Block*, Lower Bavaria District Association, to a Mr Entholzner, secretary of the Eggenfelden branch. His language was unmistakeably didactic and lecturing, and he underlined several words to emphasise them:

> I request that you hand in the applications for the public speaking course as quickly as possible. They were *already* due on *July* 17. I can scarcely believe that Eggenfelden is not sending anybody. I request that you send the confidential agents' questionnaires and your monthly report, which were due on July 28. I must require you to adhere to deadlines . . .
>
> Permit me also to remind you that payment of your contribution is due on August 5. . . Awaiting your earliest reply I remain, with Heil greeting, yr. Heinrich Himmler.

His tone combined the authoritative with the condescending. 'Dear old comrade!,' we find Himmler that same month, laboriously pecking at that same typewriter keyboard, answering a correspondent in Milan who had complained about his delay in replying. 'I have a frightful amount to do. I'm running the whole show in Lower Bavaria and have to expand the organisation every which way.' No wonder, added Himmler, that personal letters were not getting answered:

> I am pretty good at organisation work, and I am handling it on my own, and it would be really great if we had an early victory or at least a freedom fight in sight. As things are however it is gruelling work for us nationalists to slog away at something which will not yield visible fruits for ages – always aware that . . . what we are doing today may well all be for nothing, a losing battle. But we few are undertaking this hard labour unerringly, and out of our boundless love for Germany: this country is mortally ill and for that reason we cannot let her down, let alone throw in the towel.
>
> Every day, we have to tell ourselves that if we do [not] do this vital job, disseminating the German idea, then nobody else will, and then, when years down the road the time is ripe, nothing will happen because we have not laid the groundwork. It is an unselfish service to a grand ideal, a great cause, for which of course we shall never demand and probably never reap any recognition.

As the Reichstag general election approached, Himmler roared around from village to village on a used Husqvarna, a Swedish

motorbike, directing Strasser's campaign, and orating in halls, inns, and hostelries against the Jews and freemasons and speculators who had brought Germany to her knees. The result was very satisfactory. On December 7, 1924 Strasser was elected to the Reichstag in Berlin on behalf of the German People's Freedom Party (*Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei*), along with Röhm and Ludendorff, and he would hold this seat for the next eight years. This began the shift of Gregor Strasser's power base northward to Berlin.

His absence provided Himmler with greater authority than ever.

A FEW DAYS AFTER the election, on December 20, 1924, Hitler was released from the Landsberg fortress and all the pieces which had fallen into disarray in his absence began clicking back into place. Hitler and Himmler became aware of each other's existence – to put it no stronger than that. Heini's brother Gebhard would recall later that Hitler had been virtually unknown to Heini before the failed putsch, and barely after his release from Landsberg either. 'But there is no particular, let alone some remarkable, occasion of their first meeting. Himmler rather significantly wormed his way in.'

Over the objections of his more radical henchmen, Hitler had decided to pursue the path of respectability and seek power by democratic means. On February 27, 1925 he relaunched the NSDAP at a meeting in a Munich beerhall, the Bürgerbräukeller, and here he sought and was granted provisional 'sole leadership' of the new Party. Several months later, on August 21, 1925, the Party was given a legal basis too. 'Adolf Hitler, writer,' convened a board meeting at the Party's headquarters in Schelling Strasse with Franz Xaver Schwarz, the Party's formidable Treasurer, and one *Studienassessor* Hermann Schneider, teacher, as secretary and four others to draw up the legal notice setting up a corporate identity for the new Party with Hitler as chairman. Everything must be above board from now on: No more pistol-toting hotheads. As Churchill once also sneered, the Germans would apply for gun licences before starting a revolution.

WITH GÖRING IN exile in Italy, the interim SA-commander Ernst Röhm was falling out of favour with Hitler: Röhm wanted the SA

to be independent; Hitler insisted it be subordinate to the Party. On April 1, 1925, Hitler established a new unit to protect their mass meetings; 'I told myself at the time,' he said later, 'that I needed a bodyguard unit which however small would be unconditionally loyal to me, and ready to march even against their own brothers.'

This personal bodyguard would consist initially of eight of his closest friends under Julius Schreck; the rather corpulent Schreck, a former Free Corps member, wore a toothbrush moustache. Among the other early members were Emil Maurice; Johann Klitzsch, Joseph Berchtold, and Ulrich Graf, a butcher; Christian Weber, a coarse horse-dealer; Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich; Rudolf Hess, Jakob Grimminger – standard-bearer of the Party's Blood Flag (the sacred relic of the 1923 putsch) – and Walter Buch as well as Karl Fiehler. Some were men of no consequence, the names of others would go down in history.

Röhm resigned as SA commander and left politics. Eventually he embarked for South America to train the Bolivian army. He stayed in touch with his friend Heinrich Himmler however. We shall see him return to Germany, and to his own misfortune, some years later.

As Gregor Strasser's star began to rise, so did Himmler's. Himmler became a *Reichsredner* – a national-level orator for the Party – and Strasser's deputy as Gauleiter too. Now his parents took notice of him. He was no longer the aimless, gawky student. His hair cut razor-short, we find him wearing that starched collar and tie again in a sepia-coloured family photo together with his brothers and parents, on the back of which his mother had written, 'My darlings, 1925, May 17.' In such photos his father the professor is always seen offering his half-left profile to the camera, regardless of which way the rest of his family is looking.

IT WAS AUGUST 2, 1925 BEFORE Himmler rejoined the National Socialist Party; we do not know the reason for the delay, other than that such a step required a greater commitment than in 1923. His membership number was unimpressive, a five-digit number: 14,303.

He did not join Julius Schreck's new bodyguard force however. It was an elite and intended to stay that way. On September 21, Schreck issued 'Circular No. 1' to all the *Ortsgruppen*, the local Party cells,

ordering each to set up a *Schutzstaffel*, or protection squad, consisting of one commander and ten men. This name *Schutzstaffel* was not formally announced until the Party rally on November 9, 1925. That date was the anniversary of Hitler's abortive Munich putsch, so bloodily betrayed: from now on the putsch was to be overlaid with an heroic veneer in the Party annals.

For a few more months, Schreck continued in command of his *Schutzstaffel*; others saw him as a lightweight, and they voted him out of office in April 1926. Hitler nominated Joseph Berchtold, a former tobacconist and stationer, to succeed him; but Hitler never overlooked Schreck's role in founding the SS, the initials under which it became better known. Schreck, by then an emeritus SS *Oberführer*, died of meningitis in 1936. The Party staged a showy funeral, and Himmler referred to Schreck as having been Hitler's 'first SS man.' The death affected Hitler deeply and triggered his own first medical episode – agonizing stomach cramps – according to his then physician, Professor Carl von Eicken. As Hitler reminisced in January 1942, it was Maurice, Schreck, and Heiden who formed that first group of toughs in Munich. 'But it was with Himmler that the SS became a body of men, devoted to an idea, loyal unto death.' Referring to the Basque hermit priest who founded the Society of Jesus in 1537, Hitler added: 'I see in Himmler our Ignatius de Loyola. With intelligence and obstinacy, against wind and tide, he forged this instrument.' Each SS man knew that his job was to set an example, to see and not to be seen, and that the eyes of the whole nation were on him.

For a while Heinrich Himmler viewed Schreck's successor, Berchtold, with mistrust. Berchtold was small but a street-fighter, a pugilist, and unlike Himmler he was useful with both fists. Contributing to the dislike was that Berchtold had been the Party's deputy treasurer, and the Treasurer, Xaver Schwarz, was one man whom Himmler could not abide. He waited many months before signing on to Berchtold's SS, in fact until August 8, 1926. He was assigned membership number 168. A few days later, on August 13, we find *Diplom-Landwirt* Heinrich Himmler of Landshut – still sporting no Party or SS rank – sending thirteen Reichsmarks in the

new reformed currency to Schillversand, a mail-order business in Munich, and requesting them to send him 'as soon as possible' one 'Hitler shirt,' (*Hitlerhemd*), one pair of puttees, and the SS cap, head size 54 (or size 6¾). This was the black ski-cap which Schreck had introduced for the SS from his Ehrhardt-Brigade days. It was the first time that Himmler had worn the Death's Head symbol which his armies would later wear.

THE PARTY HAD RENTED FOR ITS national headquarters or *Reichsleitung* part of a narrow, three-storey residential building at No. 50 Schelling Strasse, in Munich's university district. It was a street Himmler knew well from his student days. The rooms were sparsely furnished – bare tables, ring-binders on shelves, an iron stove in a corner, a 'Germany Awake' banner leaning against a wall.

Gregor Strasser had shifted his focus to Berlin and north Germany: here he and his brother Otto had founded a newspaper publishing firm called Kampf Verlag which was veering sharply away from National-Socialist policies. Heinrich Himmler decided he must nail his flag to Hitler's mast. In mid-August 1926, a few days after formally joining the *Schutzstaffel*, he moved from Landshut to this building in Munich. Since Hitler had appointed Strasser the Party's national director of propaganda, *Reichspropagandaleiter*, on June 30, Himmler was acting as deputy propaganda chief, and he held this post in name at least until April 27, 1930 (when a Rhinelander, Dr Joseph Goebbels, took over as director). Wearing his brand-new SS hat, Himmler had a desk in the last room on the first floor for the next year and a half. The room was at the back of the building. Across the corridor, overlooking the street, photographer Heinrich Hoffmann set up his darkroom; Hitler had given Hoffmann an exclusive concession to take and sell photographs – the Party was nothing if not commercially minded.

Himmler found that he shared a room with a widow, Mathilde von Scheubner-Richter, whose husband had been shot dead next to Hitler at the Feldherrnhalle three years before. Hitler had given her the job of building a newspaper library and 'opposition research,' collecting clippings on enemy personalities and the Communist press, especially

the *Rote Fahne* ('Red Flag') and *Neue Zeitung* in Munich.

She often chatted with Himmler, reminiscing about the putsch – how General Ludendorff had dropped in on that day, and then the young Count Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorff with the latest news from Berlin, and about the initially optimistic messages from her husband during the night, 'It's all gone wonderfully,' he had said, 'and not a drop of blood spilt either.' She related too, with tears in her eyes, how Hitler had described to her the moment her husband was killed: the two had been marching arm in arm, with her husband on Hitler's right, when the police shots rang out. Struck down by a bullet, her husband had clutched at him; both had fallen so awkwardly that the body had lain across Hitler's and he could not at first get up.

HIMMLER'S CORRESPONDENCE AS DEPUTY PROPAGANDA chief stacked up. He wrote on September 10, 1926 to Albert Wierheim, the Party's under-Gauleiter in Chemnitz, setting out his needs for a series of speeches he would be delivering in that area – third-class rail fares, twenty to twenty-five marks per week to cover expenses, and one free day each week. In October 1926 he read a rambling letter from Rio, from one Marianne, talking of home-finding problems in Brazil. 'My one desire,' she mentioned, 'is to see the German people restored in health and purged of all the vermin and the bad elements in their midst so that they can resume their position in the world. Riddled as it is today, with this Jewish rabble, no revival seems possible.' He noted on the letter that he had read it 'on October 5, at 7 a.m.'

Letters like these told Heini that he was not alone in his views.

In his papers there is a letter from Plauen, in Saxony, fixing speaking dates after October 17, 1926; he would arrive 'by motorbike.' There is also the text of a speech he made days later in the small salon of the Hotel Sanssouci in Berlin. His topic was 'National *vs.* International Socialism' and his talk dwelt upon the history of capitalism and socialism. The drift is clear, if expressed in confusing language.

'People don't ask about your honesty any more, but how much cash you have. They don't ask where it comes from, but whether a man is paying his way. Capitalism has seized upon Man's supreme invention, the Machine, and uses it to enslave.' He added: 'In terms

of foreign policy, we've lost the war. We are a people without space or bread, and we are compressed, and one day our nation will burst its borders because those other peoples have the arable land which we don't. Which brings us to the life and death question: are twenty million to starve, or should a million die on the battlefield so that others can live? For once, that will be a war without the Jews. The man in the street is taught that one day the big bang will come and everything will be okay.'

> They told him that before the World War too, a Jewish war pitting Aryan peoples against Aryans. People may chuckle today about the three hundred around Rathenau, but these wove their spiders web right up to the League of Nations. Here the German has become manservant and mercenary. Unable to find the guts to fight for himself, he now has to send off his sons as soldiers to serve our enemy's war aims.
>
> The pressure within our compressed people vents itself not outwards but inwards, as we beat each other's brains in. The unemployed are played off against those with jobs, and that is the deadweight they use to keep down our subsistence level. If anybody dares raise his head – bring in the Reichswehr and police! Comrades only yesterday, slave drivers today.'

LIKE MOST RESIDENTIAL buildings in this district of Munich, No. 50 Schelling Strasse had a rear annex whose top floor was a large and airy artist's studio, an atrium. Here the SA command had its offices. After running this Brownshirt 'army' himself since losing Röhm, on November 1, 1926, Hitler appointed Captain (ret.) Franz Pfeffer von Salomon to take over as *Oberster SA Führer* (OSAF). He was a former professional soldier and Free Corps commander. Hitler told him that his vision of the SA was not as a rival to the regular army. He wanted the appearance of legality. The men were to concentrate on fitness training, Hitler wrote to Pfeffer on November 1: they should learn boxing and ju-jitsu, not rifle shooting. In *Mein Kampf* he would expand on this: the SA should win public support by sheer physical prowess, and by the numbers who turned out for street marches.

Pfeffer had his own ideas for the SA, but kept them to himself. On November 4 he formally established Joseph Berchtold's SS as a separate entity inside the SA and he gave Berchtold a new title 'Reichsführer-SS' – but it was still under Pfeffer's personal command.

At a ceremony a few days later on November 9, Hitler entrusted the Party's sacred 'Blood Flag' to the SS to guard. It was housed in that upstairs atrium.

Weathered and faded fabric, whose thrall would call down hecatombs upon millions: nobody now knows where it lies. Some say it is guarded by the SS, or their descendants, still.

13: *Where Did You Get that Hat?*

HEINRICH HIMMLER'S FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM a broadbrimmed Bavarian hat. He practised doffing it and replacing it, but was still not fully at home with it in the summer of 1927. It figures in the account he gave Gebhard of how he met Marga, his wife. He had escaped one day from a snowstorm into a hotel lobby, and had doffed it to a comely lady just inside – dousing her with a shower of wet snowflakes. One suspects the kind of legend that a person might generate to paint over a pick-up in a railway compartment, in this case one travelling from Berchtesgaden to Munich in September 1927. Perhaps it was she who had picked up him: he was not versed in the clever ways of desperate older females whose biological clock has begun to sound more like a knell. The Germans have a useful word to describe the hormonal terror that seizes such women: *Torschlusspanik*, the panic of the closing door.

The Germans speak a language replete with useful euphemisms, as we find later in this history. The man who picks up a girl has *aufgelöffelt* her, or spooned her up. In Heini's case it might even be *abgehängt*, uncoupled, because the woman owned a nursing home, a *Privat-Klinik*, at No. 49 Münchener Strasse in the west of Berlin, and had been in a childless marriage with a Mr Siegroth.

While one would like to believe the snowstorm story, the ensuing correspondence makes plain that it was summer when they first met.

Perhaps it was just raining heavily. His 1927 pocket calendar shows him on a speaking tour of Bavaria, and it was probably in Sulzbach because on September 12 he marked it as a red-letter day.

A portrait photograph of Marga, taken in 1918, shows a woman of hardening charm, with blonde hair swept up. She had been born Margarete Boden in September 1893 far to the east of Berlin, in the village of Goncerzewo twelve miles west of Bromberg. That made Marga – as she preferred to be called, to match her sisters Lydia, Berta, and Marta – seven years older. She had the eyes and high cheekbones of many a woman of that region. Her father was a landowner; they drove an open-topped roadster on seaside trips to Sarranzig, on the Baltic coast of Pomerania. Her family owned a house with a tooled wooden portico – until Poland annexed the province in 1919. Bromberg became 'Bydgoszcz.' Demobilised that year in Belgium, where she had served as a nurse in the war, Marga had settled in Berlin. Her father now had a modest villa in Zepernick – No. 26, Maple Avenue (in German, Ahorn-Allee: the house is in the suburb now named Röntgen Vale, after the discoverer of X-rays).

That was how it all began. She continued to sign with her married name Siegroth for many months, and initially even as 'Frau Siegroth.' After their chance first meeting, Heini began an exchange of letters – he in Munich, she in Berlin. She shared ownership of her clinic with a Jewish gynæcologist, Dr Bernhard Hauschild — 'my Jewish baggage,' she called him sometimes to Heini, '*mein Judenpack*.' The Jews were already mildly disliked. Heini sent her a packet of political literature, and we can only imagine with what faint enthusiasm she opened it. We know nothing about her husband; there were no other Siegroths in the Berlin phone directory in 1925 – he may have been Eugen Siegroth, an engineer ten years her senior who became a major in the SS. Heini's first letter to her was dated September 26, 1927; she evidently did not keep it. Her first letters to him speak of difficulties, which might be those of a woman in the final throes of divorce.

'Dear Mr Himmler,' she wrote on September 29,

> Thanks for your nice words. They found me in a less than happy mood, as I discovered more upsets waiting here than I'd

> have thought possible. I want, and have, to put an end to it. It's hard to start over: but it's got to be done.
>
> How are you doing? Healthwise? What's with the mustard, vinegar, and onions? Did you go back to that 'good' café again? . . . I'm waiting for the letter you have promised. Demanding as ever, right? I read your things with int'rest. Which do you want back down there? Just the red booklet, right? The weather is just wonderful. And in M. it was so rainy.
>
> Cordially yours, Mrs M. Siegroth.

As though his father was still checking, he endorsed it as 'read, Munich, Oct 4, 1927, 9 a.m.' He continued that habit throughout life.

She continued to address him as 'Mr Himmler,' using her clinic's address, and the formal *Sie* rather than *Du*. She sprinkled a trail of bait before him. 'First quiet day, and have I enjoyed it,' she wrote him on October 16. 'Otherwise just work and upsets. How are things with you? Probably lots to do, and healthwise? You can do what you *want* to do,' she chattered, bowdlerising a popular saying, 'and what you *want* to do, you can do.' Bit by bit Marga reeled the young man in. 'When are you coming to Berlin?'

Heinrich replied initially with more packets of political literature. He was ripe for plucking. 'You can buy those in B. [Berlin] too,' she chided him, 'and I've done so, so just send me those from Munich.' As for his copy of Erich Ludendorff's new book on freemasonry, yes, she had read it: 'The book sounds off against the Jews, but in my view the facts speak for themselves, so what's the point of such comments?'

Once he spoke weakly of his conscience, saying: 'One should really just strive to be moral and good.' She replied in tones of mock dismay. 'I'll not comment on your letter,' adding: 'I surely did not laugh at it.' She commiserated about his stomach problem, but blamed his diet.

DOCUMENTS AFFORDING LIGHT ON HIMMLER THESE months of 1927 are often in private hands. He was still just a dependable cogwheel in the evolving machinery at Party headquarters in Schelling Strasse. In February 1927 he was still at the Propaganda Directorate, where we find him dictating a letter to a Mr Gustav Seifert in Hanover. Seifert

had founded the NSDAP branch in Hanover six years earlier, but he had gone into exile after the failed putsch. Himmler dictated: 'I have circulated the paper to all departments of the RL [*Reichsleitung*, National Directorate] and taken note of those of your suggestions which are worthwhile, and I have forwarded your meeting report to the *Völkischer Beobachter*.' The condescending tone is worth noting.

HE HAD DIPPED INTO HITLER'S *Mein Kampf*, but did not find it inspiring. 'There are an awful lot of truths in it,' he commented. 'But its first chapters about his youth contained a lot of failings.' He would not finish reading the first volume until June 19, 1927. His speaking load consumed his time. Kurt Könnecke of Brunswick invited him on October 24, 1927 to speak there. Himmler replied on the twenty-seventh, 'I already informed the Hanover Gau directorate of my meeting dates,' namely those in the provincial Brunswick election campaign. He was speaking on Thursday the tenth, Friday the eleventh, Saturday the twelfth, and twice on Sunday the thirteenth.

Brunswick promised to be a violent campaign, even though the Party's own placards toned down the explicit attacks on the Jews – but they mentioned racketeers and profiteers, 'regardless of race and creed' as deserving of the gallows.

He exchanged several more letters with Marga Siegroth during that November. He seems to have hinted at a female he had met, because she replied: 'Your conscience pricks a bit, so you can't have got all that far with your new conquest. I could have understood that you didn't want to stick to the straight and narrow: you're young, independent and honest, not much I can do about that. But do at least wait until you have been to my divine Berlin.' Then she veered onto an artful new line: 'I can't wait to see a political meeting. I have never been to one. What impression will it make on me? Won't I merely leave feeling it's all just talk?' She talked about her own cares – her work-contract still had until April 1929 to run, and she added: 'I hope you are being careful with my letters?' 'So in one month's time you'll be here,' she wrote, nailing him down, and she wondered how they would get on, and left significant blanks for Heinrich to guess at. 'So do try to be as "decent" as you can,' she teased, 'for your "own" sake.'

He had twenty more meetings to address before Christmas, he replied, and her letter had 'disappointed' him. She devoted an entire reply on November 12 to picking that word apart – disappointed about what, her reference to 'decency'? She wrote: 'Let's talk about it when you come. I assume you'll have time for that in B.?' It was snowing in the capital. 'Do you ski? Don't forget to tell me what you were, and are, disappointed about.' She too had grounds for disappointment, she suggested. 'Perhaps you'll be in Berlin sooner than you thought. I don't know if I'll write again. Good thing you're not in front of me when you get my letter. Do you get what I am saying? I'm looking forward to the reply.'

For a few weeks he sent her more literature. She noticed that the postmark – Elberfeld – showed that he had escaped the violence in Braunschweig. 'That's a high price to pay, isn't it, and aren't you frightened by it? Don't you go saying that only "pansies" might be frightened off.' She badgered him once again to explain what he had been 'disappointed' about. Aligning herself with Heini's own views, she chattered about art exhibitions she had visited, and the disgusting Kitsch they displayed nowadays. She hoped he wasn't frozen in the cold weather. 'And don't go saying other people are freezing colder.' Then she reverted to her underlying theme: 'When do you now think you'll be coming to Berlin? Is that a firm plan?' She bowled a last curve-ball at him. On November 26 she wrote him (and it was still 'Dear Mr Himmler'): 'There is one thing in your letter which obliges me to write before you come [to Berlin], one might do it better verbally but not I. Your letters still speak of my "mistrust" and inclination to back out while I can. Yes, that is it. I have lost faith in mankind, and in the honest intentions of men toward women.'

Not of course that she mistrusted Heinrich as a *person*; in fact she was looking forward to his coming. 'I hope you won't be overloaded with work in B., so you can enjoy the beauty.' Thus she lured Himmler to Berlin, where she would take him around December 19, 1927, while letting him believe that, on the contrary, he had seduced her.

HE WAS NOW just twenty-seven. A few days later, so Otto Strasser related – the Strasser brothers were now operating out of Berlin – Heini came into

his office and confessed: '*Herr Doktor*, I am no longer a virgin.'

In his crude way, Strasser replied without looking up: 'About time too, at your time of life, that you stopped wanking.'

Heini, the eternal white knight, was both offended and conscience-stricken. His guilty letters revealed his inner turmoil. Marga replied tortuously to one: 'And as for the struggle about being immoral and un-good. I did not intend for you *suddenly* to want to be either thing – I just wanted to help you on.'

Mortified, he decided that, since she had 'given herself to him,' as he quaintly put it to Strasser, it was now his duty to marry her.

To which Otto replied: 'You're crazy if you marry that old bitch.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER left Berlin to return to Munich on December 20, 1927. Down there on the twenty-third he read a letter which 'your Marga' had written him the day after he left. In seasonably woozy handwriting, she addressed her new man as *Du* for the first time: 'My dear pal,' she opened. '*Mein lieber Guter*, A right jolly Christmas for you and yours.'

> From the bottom of my heart I wish you hours of peace and happiness. The festival of joy should bring just happiness to you too. . . Yesterday you were still here. Today?

HE REMAINED IN MUNICH FOR several months, managing the Party's speaking programme, while she bustled to and fro, planning the wedding and shopping, and ironing stuff for her bottom-drawer. The big day would be at the beginning of July. They exchanged more letters, of a content little different than any others of that genre, and at a frequency which made it increasingly difficult for him to maintain his daily workload and travels. Such letters should never be read by others, with their 'naughty-naughty' language. Lingering traces of a stricken conscience still hang over them, although our viewpoint is rather one-sided: we have hundreds that she wrote to him, but only recently those he wrote to her – these were stolen from the family home after the war ended, and were until recently in private hands in Israel, preserved on twelve rolls of microfilm.

She replied with letters which were less frosty than the earlier ones. *'Mein lieber geliebter guter Dickkopp*,' she began on January 4. 'My dear, darling, silly-billy.' 'Be nice to me and not nasty or sad' – for he was still having misgivings about what he was about to get involved in. They talked by phone, but the long-distance line was bad, and his Bavarian accent complicated things. 'Not sure I dare come down on the fifth now,' she teased him, 'in case you're still blue. Be real mad at me, but not upset. Don't know how it happened, but I couldn't do different.' She had a stiff neck, to which she ministered by taking an even stiffer grog to bed with her. 'But you my darling know how much I love my trusty trooper [*Landsknecht*] and the real main reason for that is this: because we're so far apart. Just wanted to say that.'

She tried hard to uncouple him from this Party which was taking up so much of his time. On January 6, 1928, she wrote him: 'This accursed Landshut, why do you keep having to go there?' Next day she returned to this refrain: 'You know what? Once again I'm getting the worst of things. You can't serve two masters.' Perhaps he would have more time for her once the elections were over. On May 5, she wrote, 'Darling, I just don't get it, why do you allow the Party to get the better of you, so you can't even write a letter. The other men certainly don't let themselves be used like this.'

The liaison would be an awkward one, this Heini knew, because she was a divorcee, seven years his senior, and a Protestant. A divorced woman in Germany at that time was less than *untouched*. 'I'd rather empty a hall of a thousand Communists single-handed,' said Heini. If ever there was a moment for Gebhard to take revenge for his brother's campaign against Paula Stölzle, this was it. In Catholic eyes, marrying outside the church was a sin no less than duelling. When Joseph Goebbels married the Protestant Magda Quandt, the Catholic Church excommunicated him (not, as Hitler drily remarked, that they exempted him from the obligation to pay Church taxes, as that would be to *profit* from a sin).

HIS PARENTS STILL KNEW NOTHING OF MARGA. Heini was grimly aware that they were not going to like her. His stomach pains returned. Marga wrote on April 10, 1928, 'Six weeks to go and not a

ray of hope? I always take a deep breath when I think of your parents.' Heini kept his parents' hostility from her. On April 16, she consoled him: 'All I want is *you*. . . my beloved, we are going to be so happy. As for your parents, darling, things will work out. Everybody wants to be nice to me, although I am stealing you away.' On the nineteenth, he visited his older brother Gebhard and his bride Matthilde for an hour and assured Marga the next day that even their mother 'is not against us.' But he added, 'She is sad on account of your religion.'

That was putting it mildly. On April 22 Anna, Heini's mother, wrote him words that left no doubt: 'You yourself must know and sense that besides joy a deep sorrow fills my heart as your mother.'

Marga's lengthy reply to Heini was uncompromising: 'Our parents on either side have little or nothing to say about it, that's *my* view.' She added: 'Darling, I can't think that *you* will allow somebody else now or later to interfere in our affairs. . . I won't. Just so you know.' Heini went to see his parents on April 24 and wrote to Marga: 'My good mother is just sad because of the religion, not because of you,' he hastily added, 'but because I told her I'm not a Catholic now, these last three or four years. She wept a lot at that, my poor, good mother, but I cannot tell a lie; I hope she will get over it and forget.' He added a white lie: '– But both parents send their *most heartfelt* greetings.'

His family saw this newcomer, this woman from Berlin, as demanding and unfriendly, as a 'too often wailing woman,' as his brother described her; Gebhard did not warm to her.

On April 26, Marga's business partner, Dr Hauschild, agreed to pay her 12,500 marks in cash for her share of the Berlin clinic. 'Ten more weeks, darling,' she wrote to her fiancé. His mother and father sent letters and cards to Marga; she never replied, flatly telling Heini on June 17, 'Darling, give my regards, once and for all, to your folks.' That should have been warning enough that he was steering into choppy seas. On June 23, with just days to go, she rubbed it in: 'Darling, see to it, won't you, that for the first two weeks we won't have to go in to see your folks.'

He complied, and seldom ever brought Marga to see his parents after that. There is a family-group photo of the visit dated May 1928 in one of Marga's albums: Heini's father is wearing a smile of the

rictus variety, while Heini himself looks like a recently hanged man. His face wears all the joy of a mediæval captive, aware of the fate in store for him. That he persisted with this marriage throughout the years, and prevailed in such a hostile climate, shows how deeply he was in her thrall; but even so, he would not abandon the Party.

She had sold her share in the clinic to Dr Hauschild, with some last-minute haggling by him. 'This Hauschild!' was all she wrote to Heini. 'Once a Jew, always a Jew!' It showed she was learning. By June 8, Hauschild's cash had still not materialised, he was still talking about 'tomorrow'; she parrotted, '*Das Pack*!' From afar, Heini soothed her: 'Good lady, don't get mad at your Jews and others.'

THE WEDDING DATE drew nigh. By April 27, 1928 Marga was again excitedly writing to her 'wild and trusty trooper' that there were only ten more weeks to go; and on June 8, 'only another twenty-two days.'

At the end of May she used the Hauschild money to buy a property in Waldtrudering, six miles east of downtown Munich. (Waldtrudering now boasts the wealthiest households in the city, but at that time No. 108 Wasserburger Landstrasse was a simple bungalow on a country highway.) The garden was large enough for half a dozen chickens and a smallholding, but the soil was poor. The house had two rooms up and two down, and a spacious backyard. They would spend the next five or six years here, as Germany lurched into yet another economic depression.

ON JUNE 20 SHE WROTE COYLY, 'YOU'RE so naughty, you haven't written me today.' She reminded him not to forget to be there, 'Monday, at the Bodens, at No. 26, Maple Avenue in Röntgen Vale.' Until then she would stay with her parents. She signed off to her 'naughty, naughty lover,' her darling, darling, with many kisses, from 'your Marga.'

Tying the knot in Berlin on Tuesday, July 3, 1928, they married twice – once in a civil ceremony at the registrar's office down the road from her West End clinic, in Münchener Strasse; and then at St Anne's, a Protestant church in Zepernick, north-east of Berlin. The pastor here was the ailing Ulrich Herzberg. Marga, known to be from a local church-going family, turned up with her betrothed in tow a

few days before for the pre-marital instruction. Heini was wearing his best suit, probably now with NSDAP Party badge in his lapel. Herzberg's daughter remembered only her father's uncomfortable shrug when he related this at table afterwards. Herzberg asked his friend Gerhard Gloege, the pastor of St Mary's in Bernau, to officiate, and went off to take the waters at Bad Kissingen; thus he evaded the poison chalice, as he said. (Zepernick later made Himmler an honorary citizen, along with Hitler and Hindenburg.)

Marga's father and brother, Helmut, acted as witnesses. Heini's family stayed away; his two brothers pleaded exams. There seem to be no photos, even in Marga's albums. Directed in the mid-1930s to research Himmler's family tree, his staff found that Zepernick had no record; the correspondence with the parish went on until Heini's secretary, Miss Potthast – of whom we shall learn more – sent *them* a copy of the certificate. By then it was August 26, 1939, and the world was just a week shy of more important things.

HIS FRIENDS were puzzled, indeed aghast, at what Himmler had done. One wrote to 'my dear Heini' in a mocking tone about his horror upon hearing that he had made the ultimate sacrifice. 'I have cast a spell that dooms you to have two dozen kids and end up fat as a swine. Your bride's taste in picking such a vulgar, hateful, heretical and blasphemous Nazi-Sozi as her life's companion, a man whose political immaturity and stupidity notoriously stink to high heaven, is truly memorable.'

DURING THAT WINTRY stay in Brandenburg, Himmler opened the second book of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. In fact, just as we know the date and hour when he received each of Marga's letters quoted above, we know that he finished reading Hitler's chapter on the *Weltanschauung* of the Party, on December 15, 1927, while staying at Neubukow, south of Berlin. He read the first 162 pages in four days, paused while he took the train back to Munich on the twentieth, and read another 175 pages in the following two weeks.

He marked passages which seemed to be of importance: for example where Hitler had written about the need to instil a sense of

racial superiority in their men, Himmler carefully lined the words and jotted a reminder: 'Education of SS and SA.' A coloured crayon also underlined the well-known passage in which the author had declared that if twelve or fifteen thousand of their 'Hebrews' had suffered gassing as he had, during during the World War, that might have made a difference to the outcome: but we do not know what Himmler made of those words, and they are themselves ambiguous.

He absorbed all that Hitler had written about the causes of the 1918 revolution, the inequality of the races, the pernicious effects of race-mixing, and the importance of defending the higher race from the degenerate effects of Jews who sought to infiltrate. On page 33 of *Mein Kampf* Hitler had written about what are now called 'multi-cultural communities'; and Himmler noted his own sinister prophecy: *Die Möglichkeit der Entmischung ist vorhanden* – 'There does exist the possibility of un-mixing them.'

14: *Reichsführer at Twenty-Eight*

AFTER SEPTEMBER 1926, Heinrich Himmler was chief dogsbody of the Party's bustling national director of propaganda, Gregor Strasser. Strasser had then been appointed director of organisation of the Party in December 1927. He and his rambunctious brother Otto had their own ideas, which did not always match Hitler's. They had moved their focus to northern Germany, and set up Kampf Verlag in the Ruhr, a publishing house in competition with the Party's. Their northern National Socialist movement was left-leaning and growing fast; it was avowedly anti-capitalist, which contrasted with Hitler's views. Strasser wanted to win the workers – Hitler saw the need to win over the industrialists and their money first.

As for Himmler, he worked hard but lay low. He watched, learned, and waited, while he inconspicuously gathered the control-strings to himself. He was still in Pfeffer's *Sturmabteilung*, the SA. This private army now had a uniform – it looked as if somebody had bought a job-lot of brown shirts, somebody commented. Its strength in 1927 was around ten thousand; it grew to three times that number in 1929 and to sixty thousand by 1930.

Inevitably, there were differences. Hitler still banked on the Reichswehr, Germany's small professional army, while the ambitious Pfeffer saw his Brownshirts as eventually taking their place.

The SS remained a part of the SA. In March 1927, Erhard Heiden took over from Berchtold as national SS Leader, '*Reichsführer*,' and that autumn Hitler nominated Heinrich Himmler as Heiden's deputy. It was an almost meaningless sop to this hard-working young man.

Heiden was a few weeks younger than Himmler. The two men shared the novel idea of turning the SS into an elite. The members were to be cut back to a hard core of 280. The SS men were garbed in the same brown as the parent *Sturmabteilung*, but they wore a black cap with a death's-head badge worked in silver and a black tie; after 1932, the uniform was changed to all-black. The special uniform gave SS men a somewhat intimidating aspect. They sat in on Party meetings by decree, non-smoking and as silent as Trappist monks.

THE JOB OF 'DEPUTY REICHSFÜHRER' DID not amount to much. On November 4, 1927, Himmler issued SS Order No. 2 from the 'Schutzstaffel-Oberleitung,' Munich, to all *Schutzstaffeln*: with the mildest hint at criticism, he began by explaining that Hitler's absence from Schelling Strasse had delayed the issue of the service regulations. Adopting then his familiar tone of reproof, he noted that ten *Staffeln* had so far failed to submit their monthly report for September: 'I expect in future reports to be submitted promptly and without notice, and I remind SS commanders that the October report is due on November 5.'

The rest of this Order No. 2 concerned uniform etiquette. 'The shoulder strap,' he defined, 'is to be worn to the left shoulder and must be fitted with two rifle hooks.' SS men were to obtain the eagle badge, the national emblem of the Movement with black buttons for the side pockets, at 15 pfennigs each, to replace the unsuitable white mother-of-pearl buttons. They were to be bought like everything else from the Party's stockist Adolf Rottenberger. 'It is forbidden to wear leather- or above-the-knee pants customary in Bavaria.'

Sportswear and puttees were to be dyed black, as were leather items like belts and shoulder straps. The black dyestuffs were to be bought from the Rottenberger outlet too. 'I do not underestimate the difficulties of this regulation,' instructed Himmler, 'but I consider it necessary if the SS is to stamp an even more uniform impression

on our next Party Rally.' The SS directorate intended to carry out snap inspections. As for new recruits, ruled Himmler, a very high standard was to be adopted. 'We recruit only on the basis that this man is to remain a National Socialist for the rest of his life, and that any idea of resignation or expulsion is unthinkable.'

Deputy Reichsführer or not, however, his main work was still running the propaganda machine, allocating speakers and booking halls. Gregor Strasser had evidently let things slide. Young Karl Kaufmann, running the Ruhr gau, wrote to Himmler on February 16, 1928 openly criticising this centralisation in Munich. 'I would be interested to hear from you, in person, your thinking,' he wrote, using the personal *Du*, 'on what prospects actually exist for obtaining speakers over the next months.' Munich was letting them down, he said. A peasant rally was planned in Münster for March 4, but Munich had provided no leaflets. 'That is surely the job of the Reich Propaganda Directorate, providing us with the ammunition, *i.e.*, leaflets. After I heard your talk on agriculture in Upper Bavaria,' he flattered, 'you were obviously the one to compose such leaflets, particularly given the present emergency in agriculture.'

By the spring of 1928, Schelling-Strasse's headed notepaper boasted a second telephone line. On March 28 we find Himmler sending a typical boilerplate letter to the Gauleiter of Württemberg, Wilhelm Murr, fixing details of a function in Ulm on April 20. 'The meeting is herewith confirmed,' this boilerplate letter read. 'We ask the speaker to inform the sub-gauleitung of his time of arrival, topic, expenses etc.' The speaker would be twenty-seven-year old Dr Hans Frank, freshly qualified as a Munich lawyer.

THE POLITICAL POLICE at Munich Police headquarters had begun to take notice of this young man; but agents' reports on Himmler were shallow and often wrong. They opened a dossier on Himmler, listing the various paramilitary bodies he had joined since 1919, and identifying him on February 3, 1928 as deputy chief of the Party's national Propaganda Directorate, Gauleiter of Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate (and also temporarily in charge of another gau, namely Upper Bavaria and Swabia). They learned on March 12, 1928,

that Himmler was dealing with all day-to-day business for Heiden, and personally signing orders which the SS issued. On April 24, 1928, the police found that he was now deputy chief of the SS.

THERE IS PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF of Himmler's standing. At the beginning of September 1928 Hitler addressed his men in that atrium in Schelling Strasse. Standing in front of the hallowed Blood Flag, and flanked by memorials to their sixteen comrades cut down by police bullets in November 1923, Hitler outlined the way forward. Few of those at that top table would later die in comfort. To Hitler's right sat the bespectacled Philipp Bouhler, who later oversaw the euthanasia programme; Alfred Rosenberg, ideologue; Walter Buch, the Party's judge; and Franz Xaver Schwarz, the incorruptible Treasurer.

Seven years older than Himmler, Rosenberg was born in Reval, Estonia, and had spent the Great War in Moscow, where he witnessed the excesses of the Bolshevik revolution and Jews moving into the hierarchy after October 1917: Jews would occupy 85 percent of the top five hundred positions. He had witnessed Judea again in the Soviet Republic of Munich as Hitler was launching his movement. Just one place to the left of an unsmiling Gregor Strasser, sat Himmler, in a stiff collar and tie, a Party badge plugged into the buttonhole of the suit he had worn for his wedding two months earlier.

He dictated an in-house message two weeks after that meeting, addressed to 'Dear Mr Hitler,' with a request that Comrade Hermann Esser, 'be lectured that meetings in the gau of Upper Bavaria and Swabia are feasible only providing the gau directorate has given permission'– *i.e.*, Himmler himself, wearing his other hat as Gauleiter.

IT WAS AROUND this time, in the autumn of 1928, that Marga became pregnant. Until then Himmler had been staying on the second floor of No. 2, Gabelsberger Strasse, not far from his offices. She had pleaded with him to stop spending money. They lived frugally both then and later. Her annual post-tax income in 1928 was 1,840 marks, and 1,620 in 1929 – perhaps meaningless figures now, but clearly not betokening any wealth; her bank balance at the end of 1928 was 5,262 marks. His was a full-time job, on the Party payroll.

In unkinder times, people would call Himmler a poultry-farmer, but that is not true. Marga's backyard had a chicken-run and rabbit hutches, and a vegetable patch, and they raised poultry, rabbits, geese, vegetables. A couple of photos show five chickens in 1929. Marga's later son in law related: 'The house had no land, it can't be called a farm. They did talk about procuring a stock of poultry but never actually did.' His brother said the same: 'They never had more than some twenty or thirty hens.' But 'poultry-farmer' has a useful ring, like describing Joachim von Ribbentrop as a 'champagne salesman.'

There did linger something of a farmer in his heart. He printed headed notepaper: HEINRICH HIMMLER, DIPLOM-LANDWIRT – roughly BSc. Agric. – and started a newspaper supplement, *Der Bundschuh*, named after the mediæval peasant's lace-up moccasin. This had been the icon on standards carried during Germany's peasant revolts in the fifteenth century, in skirmishes with French troops along the Upper Rhine; the ringleaders were invariably put down. The *Bundschuh* notepaper was headed: 'Combat-sheet for the Awakening German Farmer,' and 'Editor in chief, Heinrich Himmler, Waldtrudering, Munich. Printed and Published by *Der Donaubote*, Ingolstadt.' The title hinted at a policy of exploiting smouldering countryside unrest against Capital, Big City, and the Government.

At least one issue appeared in 1928 under Gregor Strasser's imprint, with Hinrich Lohse as editor. The German archives hold a dozen issues (subtitled 'News for National Socialist Countryfolk'), dated between January 20 and July 25, 1929. Himmler may have encountered Fritz Reinhardt, its editor in 1930. After Reinhardt entered the ministry of finance, his name featured in one of the grimmest projects in history, 'Aktion Reinhardt'.

As for *Bundschuh*, Magda displayed more economy than tact, and used the back of its old notepaper for letters to her husband.

HIS COLLEAGUES WATCHED this ill-matched couple with some curiosity. Himmler's long-time chief of staff would remark that Heini was 'kind' to his wife although she was so much older. 'The marriage did not make sense,' said another one-time intimus, Richard Darré, 'The wife was . . . completely lacking in feminine charm. She dressed

badly and was somewhat ungainly – with bony, bandy legs.' He speculated, helplessly: 'This woman must know something about Himmler before he was active politically.'

Marga showed scant enthusiasm for politics. Her Party membership book was dated August 1, 1928 (membership No. 97,252). Heini was often away speaking, and did not countersign it until October 30, 1929. Her early letters betray no interest in his associates, but hinted at a willingness to learn. She voiced concern about his physical safety, repeated her negative views about Ludendorff, mentioned Hitler rarely, and the Jews less: the toxin which had begun to infect Himmler at university in Munich had not reached her in Berlin.

He bided his time as deputy chief of the SS. The actual 'Reichsführer' at that time, Erhard Heiden, was business-minded, because in June 1927 Hitler granted the mail-order agency which he ran with Adolf Rottenberger a sole concession to provide uniforms and equipment for the SA and its SS element. This little sideline led to Heiden's downfall. On January 21, 1929 the hostile *Münchener Post* published an article on 'Jews as Hitler's Suppliers.' The mail-order agency had purchased materials from a Jewish company, and made a killing by creative book-keeping while cheating both the tax-man and the Party over sales. Rottenberger and Heiden sued the newspaper in defamation, and Heiden offered his resignation from the SS, in a letter dated January 22, 1929. To avoid the impression that the Jews or opposition press had forced Hitler's hand, the dates seem to have been fiddled a bit – announcing that Heiden was resigning for 'family and business reasons,' backdating the resignation to January 5 and claiming in a statement dated 'January 20' that Heiden had asked to be relieved weeks earlier, on December 8. The facts seem plain however.

THIS WAS HOW HIMMLER GOT THE JOB. Possibly on Gregor Strasser's advice, Hitler appointed him as Reichsführer SS. The Party was full of empty titles. Hitler probably did not give it another thought. The date chosen for his appointment was 'January 6, 1929.' Himmler was far away, speaking in East Prussia for a week, from January 22. As for Heiden, he came to a sticky end some years later. In April 1933 he was chatting with Emil Maurice in a Munich cafe when he was called

away to the telephone. His body was fished out of the Isar River a few days later, stitched into a weighted sack. History is content to pin the blame on Himmler but, as so often, actual evidence is thin.

'REICHSFÜHRER' WAS a title with a promising resonance. In Himmler's busy hands the SS soon took a firmer shape. By the end of 1929 it had reached one thousand again, but they were a hand-picked elite. Himmler wanted them to be visibly the best. He would command the SS until days before the end in 1945. At the end of June 1944, his SS would number eight hundred thousand men (three-quarters were in its armed branch, the Waffen-SS). The Allies appear to have singled out SS generals because of their special quality, and would weep few tears over their disappearance or 'suicide' in captivity.

For Himmler this date, January 6, 1929, would be a defining milestone in his life. Even in 1943, SS commanders were formally nudged to remind them of his anniversary. The reminders were among the thousands of SS signals decoded at the time by the British.

HEINRICH HIMMLER began assembling a capable and hard-working staff. First, he would need a trusty adjutant: on July 20, 1929 he appointed the young aviator Rudolf Hess, who had shared Hitler's Landsberg imprisonment. 'You are also appointed,' Himmler wrote, 'the personal adjutant of Adolf Hitler' – thus ensuring a direct personal link to the very highest level, a precursor of the arrangement he adopted subsequently with Karl Wolff and then Hermann Fegelein.

A few days later, during the fourth annual Party Rally, held in Nuremberg on the first four days of August, he produced a well-drilled regiment of SS men. This was the first occasion when Pfeffer had displayed the full might of the parent *Sturmabteilung*, a private army parading in uniform and paraphernalia, even with their own field kitchens. Writing in 1946, Otto Wagener recalled the scene without a trace of the obligatory remorse: 'An SS *Standarte* brought the parade to a close. Well ordered, a proud black-uniformed column of men with Heinrich Himmler marching at their head. The crowd applauded and their cheers rose to a climax as the last men marched off and Adolf Hitler turned and raised his right arm in salute to our

tribune.' The four-day event left several dead in violent clashes. In the glare of nationwide publicity, Himmler's SS men held the line. Hitler promised to recognise their bravery in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.

Himmler glowed. Signing now as 'RFSS,' he put his name to an SS Order of the Day: 'I express to all SS commanders and men my gratitude for the faultless discipline displayed at Nuremberg and the magnificent services performed during the Party Rally.' In light of their organisation's expansion, he hinted, his next SS Order would contain a raft of promotions – and then came the minutiæ of which he was such a master – the payments to be made for torches, the return of SS garb lost by Gert Schmidt of their Darmstadt unit and of property handed in by SA man Max Adler, who had been stabbed during the rally and taken to hospital, and other trivia which should not perhaps have occupied a Reichsführer at all.

As things turned out, it was the last such rally of the *Kampfzeit*, the 'Years of Struggle.' Unsurprisingly, Nuremberg's city council decided not to permit this spectacle in 1930 and 1931, and in 1932, when times changed, the Party lacked the funds to stage it.

AT ONE SESSION OF THIS 1929 RALLY, Himmler spoke and recommended that the Party follow the landowners of Holstein, and set up their own Livestock Marketing corporation. His interest in agriculture was however waning. He had finally a much more promising niche, the SS. In one of his albums (later looted, like so much else, from his home) there is a portrait photo dated '1929' in his handwriting; on his necktie Himmler sports the Party badge; his uniform has the collar-tabs of an SS *Oberführer*. (Hitler would not allow the style 'Reichsführer' to gain status as a *rank* until the events of June 1934). The expert eye will observe on Himmler's breast-pocket the little tin shield commemorating this August 1929 Party rally. It will later be much imitated by counterfeiters. A few years later, he and other veterans would receive the much-prized golden Party badge, the one circled with Golden oak-leaves.

MARGA'S FIRST CHILD, A GIRL, WAS BORN just after that Nuremberg Rally, on August 8, 1929. Marga's gynæcologist was Dr C Brack,

father of a twenty-four year old, Viktor, whom we meet later on: he too would die an uncomfortable death. The Himmlers named the girl Gudrun.* They sent his elderly parents a telegram that evening: 'GUDRUN SAYS HELLO TO GRANDPARENTS. MARGARETE HEINRICH.'

Heini had hoped for a boy, but Marga, already thirty-seven, was found to be incapable of further pregnancies; he addressed that disappointment later in the way that men sometimes do. Gudrun had to be baptised as a Protestant like Marga. Her arrival was another milestone for Heini, if of a different kind. Throughout her confinement Marga had written chatty letters to her absent husband, the new Reichsführer; for example in May 1929, about the cold weather and how she spent her day – mostly knitting, or reading or in bed, or in the garden worrying about their dying apple trees, or shelling peas outside in the spring sunshine – and about a letter that had come from Otto Strasser. Having won him by that unfortunate Berlin event, Marga had started off addressing him as 'my darling darling,' but soon tuned down the uxorial volume. By 1931 she would be writing to him as '*mein lieber Guter*,' roughly 'my dear pal,' and as their relationship congealed that became her regular salutation.

THERE CAME another rite of passage, next to installing a telephone in their bungalow. He bought their first car, turning down a slightly cheaper Hanomag ('it is a rotten swindle and Jewish firm') in favour of a tiny BMW Dixi, 'better by far,' in June 1928. The dashing little Dixi was the first automobile that BMW ever built – actually an Austin Seven manufactured under licence, a two-seater with a bonnet fastened by a leather strap. Marga pasted into her albums pictures of her husband seated in that car, aviator-helmeted in the fashion of the times, or wearing his early SS cap; he seemed as proud of the Dixi as of his new baby daughter, and looked after both with

* We encountered Gudrun, this gracious and devoted daughter, once, in 1993, in a research room of the German Federal Archives – it was the same day by chance that we were expelled from Germany for the next twenty-three years. She thanked us for donating two of her father's diaries to the archives and she explained that she had spent the years since 1945 writing a book to clear her father's name. She died in 2018, on the anniversary of his death at British hands.

indiscriminate tenderness, as young husbands are wont to do – wrapping the radiator in a blanket, and clutching a half-smoked cigar. He would drive this modest motorcar until the Party came to power, after which Mercedes provided him with better.

He was away for weeks at a time as the Party's propaganda chief – motoring around the country, speaking and organising in Dresden, Hamburg, and elsewhere. Marga's letters to him had three themes: the monthly housekeeping allowance, where was his next letter, and when was he coming home? Signing herself as 'your little woman,' she reported on the baby's weight, ailments, and progress; that the baby slept and dribbled, and otherwise did what infants do. 'You haven't written,' she chided him on October 13, 1929, 'that's very naughty.' Her life revolved around tea-parties with other wives, her interests, her weight-gain, and eating disorders.

As her husband's career developed, Marga's comments lacked any profundity. Her main concern was that her last letter might come back as undeliverable. She dismissed the historic events of the Harzburg Front in 1931 in a single line, referred briefly to Hitler's and 'Göhring's' visit to President Hindenburg, and learned only from idle visitors that a new Cabinet had been formed, which even the most cursory glance at the newspapers on sale outside her domestic bubble would surely have told her.

HEINRICH MADE A BETTER FATHER THAN HUSBAND. Gudrun grew into a blue-eyed, blonde girl, with a winning smile that replaced a teenage scowl. Throughout life he called her 'Püppi' – Dolly; Gudrun called him Pappi. She wrote in a round Gothic script which was better than her spelling (she had to learn to write all over again when Germany abandoned the script in 1943 – not that Heini would ever change his). On the little girl's first birthday they drew an outline of her right hand, but she was already a fidget and the result showed it.

On May 17, 1930, Gebhard, his brother, brought round his own daughter Irmgard and they sat the two girls on their grandparents' laps for a photo: 'She can almost say Mama already,' boasted Marga to her absent husband. On Gudrun's birthday in August the Himmler grandparents came, and little friends like Margarete and Heinrich

and Herbert and Dietlinde Schönbohm. If only, we can almost hear History sigh, Heinrich Himmler had allowed himself to be rowed off into these harmless domestic backwaters while there was still time.

THEY REMAINED LEGALLY WED UNTIL PARTED by his death at British hands sixteen years later, but Marga's diary confirms that little remained of their marriage for its last half-dozen years. Upon learning of Heini's death in 1945, she would display a cold indifference, in the words of an American journalist. She betrayed not a flicker of emotion, either by a lowering of her eyes, or a twitch of the hands. 'She sits in an armchair with her legs crossed, her hands nobly extended, her head erect and her cold light-blue eyes immovably fixed on me.'

Marga's knowledge of Heini's later history was limited to Dachau, his showpiece penal camp outside Munich. Challenged about the 'Reinhardt' site at Majdanek, and told that 'two million' had been put to death there – a gross exaggeration – she exclaimed: 'No, I never knew that, really not! I knew that concentration camps existed, but I have never seen one and did not guess that so many people lost their lives there.' She had seen prisoners once, she recalled, when they were brought to dig a deep air-raid shelter at Gmund: 'But they were so merry and bright,' she reminisced. 'Before I was married,' she said, ending the interrogation in her provincial, flat tone of voice, 'I did know some Jews. I have no idea of what has become of them since.'

There is little reason to disbelieve that. The post-war German courts treated her kindly, while remarking that she 'must have known,' and allowed her to recover the house, since she had bought it with her own funds. Questioned on whether she had seen her husband frequently, she replied: 'Well, very frequently, one couldn't say that.' In fact, she amplified, not often at all. 'How did you get along with him?' 'Must I answer that question?' 'Well, why not?' The interrogator pressed her: 'Nobody is going to read it except myself.' All her misery poured out in her reply: 'Well I think that the Americans and the British know just as well as I do that my husband was not faithful to me.'

AS THE YEARS PASSED, AND AS GUDRUN grew older, Himmler's staff took a jejune view of 'Püppi' and her mother, these rivals for

his attention. Eugen Dollmann, his interpreter, a man of dubious sexuality, sniffed that wherever 'Dame Marga' appeared on the scene 'something untoward happened.' Himmler's chief of staff allowed: 'He was quite dotty about Gudrun – she was an only child and blonde and blue-eyed.' Karl Wolff called 'Püppi' a brat. 'You could never say anything about her to her father,' he said in 1945, having burned his fingers once in the attempt: 'That was dangerous.'

Not all her schoolmates liked her, or so they later said. One, Catherine, recalled Gudrun turning up over-dressed by her mother, with her hair in braids; she struggled to keep up with her classmates, routinely scored low, and had to repeat some semesters. From future fields of war, Himmler telephoned almost daily, sent her gifts, and replied to letters. He hoped to instil in Gudrun all the traits he had learned from his father: write a diary, keep an album, and above all be good. Visiting their home in Gmund in 1941 when Gudrun was nearly twelve, Himmler carefully inscribed these values in her album: 'In life one must always be decent and brave and kind.'

Probity, honour, courage, kindness: they were the words he would have wanted inscribed on his own escutcheon too. By then a malevolent History was already dictating differently – so differently, that he had Gudrun's security escort remove her from the movie theatre to which her school friends were regularly taken to watch the newsreels, as he did not want her exposed to the ugly images of war. That summer of 1941 he would encourage Gudrun to start that journal. She would enter in it two months later: 'Pappi phoned from the Rus[s]ian front. It's a tough fight with Rus[s]ia, the hardest fight of all.'

She began that scrapbook too. On one page is a two-line stanza, quoted from Goethe, dedicated to Gudrun by a little friend, Elke, and carefully penned in the same round schoolgirl script:

> *Tu nur das Rechte in Deinen Sachen;*
> *Das andre wird sich von selber machen!*

'Do only what's just in your affairs,' it read. 'The rest will take care of itself,' And little Elke added: 'Don't forget your friend Elke Langbehn, November 19, 1941 at Walchensee.'

YES, THE LANGBEHNS. THEY ALWAYS VACATIONED at their summer house on Lake Walchensee. It was one of the deepest Alpine lakes, over a hundred fathoms deep, and little Elke spent her holidays there with Gudrun too. Elke's father was Carl Langbehn, a wealthy liberal lawyer a year younger than Himmler. He acted as Karl Wolff's lawyer and was something of a friend to Himmler too – but a friend of the expendable kind. Just two weeks before then, on November 5, 1941, Himmler had spoken with Wolff about 'Dr Langbehn and his purchases.' He had an uneasy conscience about Langbehn. In 1943 Heini would have Langbehn arrested and, in 1944, hanged, arguably to silence him. He turned a deaf ear on little Elke's entreaties.

They were coming into turbulent times, times when long accepted human values would become inverted. Langbehn *père* had remained just too decent, and too brave, and too kind, in a time of total war, and he would pay the price.

15: *Jews not admitted*

WITH HIMMLER AS REICHSFÜHRER, HITLER'S prætorian guard took shape. If we look for patterns, a primary task of the biographer, then by 1930 we have found in Himmler an insistence on detail, order, 'proper channels,' hard work, incorruptibility of process, and purity of intent. As his little staff at Schelling Strasse swelled, these were high among the qualities that he sought to imbue in the SS.

Throughout military history, the fittest young men have always aspired to join the very best, and in 1930s Germany that was the SS; it was the reason its envious enemies marked the SS for destruction. In December 1930, the elite force numbered 2,727. A year later it was growing at the rate of two thousand a month and he would have a staff of fifty; the SS would have reached 14,964 men, and nearly all were unpaid volunteers. It had a new emblem, two white 'Sig'-runes on a black background (he was inspired by Nordic mythology). The runes formed the letters SS, like neighbouring lightning flashes.

Himmler laid down guidelines on the drill, and on marching bands. When the SS squad stomped into view at parades and broke into the physically demanding *Paradeschritt* the crowds caught their breath and cheered. Himmler, marching at their head, had learned to master its precise, jerky ballet too. Years after the great conflict was over, we found those who had survived, the fittest of all, in

the highest positions in German industry and elsewhere. Not for nothing would Germany's enemies depose that he who had belonged to Himmler's SS and survived, should be restrained, muzzled, and emasculated. They were the new fraternity men, a band of brothers who had been through the fires of hell. The enemies would devise a 'special procedure' for the SS.

MARGA WROTE HIM REGULARLY, SHARING with him her humdrum household existence – shelling peas, feeding The Brat ('*der Fratz*') sleeping, filing away Heini's press clippings, laying in seeds for carrots and beet, and juggling accumulating bills for potatoes, life insurance, and sickness benefits, and deciding which bill to pay next. Heini's pay as Reichsführer cannot have been much, since his direct superior, the Supreme SA-Führer ('Osaf') Franz von Pfeffer was getting only 300 marks a month; other Party officials drew only 200 marks if married and even less if not. Money was short, and like millions of others the Himmlers were playing off tradesmen, carpenters, tax collectors, and other creditors against each other.

She was a good mother, but she found fault with every servant and cook they employed; the staff turnover was high. Only Hans Bastian, the driver assigned to Himmler in May 1930, escaped her censure. Occasionally Heini telephoned her, perhaps grateful to be on the road so much, away speaking in Sagan or Schweidnitz in Silesia. '*Ach*,' she wrote, 'I'm so curious what you'll have to tell me; sometimes I really am sad that I always have to sit at home.'

Letters had come, she told him, from the *Donaubote* newspaper, and the Artam League, and there was also a card from a Pastor Friedrich Langenfass – he has heard we have a child, said Marga ('Your father told him . . . Your parents do know that our baby's going to be baptised a Protestant, don't they?') Langenfass's interest was probably not casual: later the Dean of Munich, he held similar beliefs to Himmler's. 'Our people cannot help but notice with bitterness,' he said in one sermon, 'our Jewish fellow citizens . . . and there is scarcely one [Jew] who is undernourished like us honourable Germans.'

Poor deserted Marga; she begged Heini to write more often, at least to the baby, just as a sign of life. He did write, though not as often as

she wanted. He sent her letters and crossword-puzzle magazines – her other hobby, next to growing cactuses. 'Got the first mail from my bad-boy husband,' she scolded him on September 24, 1929. 'The parcel of newspapers had been opened, so anybody could have read your letter.' Heini went home for his twenty-ninth birthday on October 7, but departed three days later, leaving Marga to report to him that the Rhode Island Red was a fine cockerel but that she had had to return two of the three chickens supplied to her, as they'd refused to sit, so they'd pay just for the cockerel, and not a pfennig more. 'Otherwise nothing of importance,' this unhappy woman reported. 'Now I'm going to have a bath and off to bed. . . Tomorrow I will sleep in and then write again to my bad-boy lover.'

HIS RIVALS TOOK NOTE OF HIMMLER, AND not always kindly. Dr Joseph Goebbels, Gauleiter of Berlin with a shrill voice and sharp brain, wrote of him at this time as 'a small, fine man, good natured but perhaps a bit indecisive; a Strasser product.'

That might have been true earlier, but now Gregor Strasser was being phased out, though savvy enough to keep on good terms with Himmler, his former assistant. At the end of 1929, a picture postcard of a snowscape addressed to Mr and Mrs Himmler in Waldtrudering came from Gregor and Else Strasser vacationing in Reit im Winkl, a Bavarian resort. The message was – 'Dear Himmler, From our ski vacation we wish you and your respected spouse all the best for 1930! Yours, G. Strasser. Greetings, Else Strasser!' – banal enough but worth mentioning, given what happened to Gregor later.

The gauleiters, the Party chiefs in each province, were not pleased with the growth of Franz von Pfeffer's SA, and turned to Himmler for support. But Himmler kept aloof; he wanted his SS to be a cut above the brown-shirted rowdies of the SA. Regulations he drafted said that the SS recruit had to display a sense of chivalry and righteousness. SS lockers would have no locks or padlocks, because comrades did not steal from one another. The SS which Himmler had carved out of the SA, said Gebhard later, aspired to values generally accepted the world over – simplicity, cleanliness, courage, loyalty, incorruptibility. The aspiration was not always achieved, but in 1953 Germany's first

post-war Chancellor would specifically enlarge his public words of admiration for Germany's wartime armed forces to include the men of the Waffen-SS, 'in so far as they fought honourably and exclusively as soldiers for Germany.'

The *Sturmabteilung* of which the SS was still part did not have its values. Sooner or later the friction between the SA and the SS might lead to a conflagration. The SA supreme commander Pfeffer wanted a simple revolutionary act to overthrow the Weimar Republic. Himmler, like Hitler, saw that as spelling the end of the Party, as the government would crush them again like bugs, as in 1923. It suited Hitler that his commanders were at odds with each other. That was his way. When Pfeffer and his chief of staff Otto Wagener protested at aggressive SS recruiting methods, Hitler backed Himmler: 'What I want is a personal bodyguard, much smaller than the SA, but sworn body and soul to myself – men willing to go through fire for me, and upon whom I can rely.' Speaking to Pfeffer, Himmler used even plainer language: 'What Hitler wants is a prætorian guard which will carry out his orders, even if one day it has to be used against the SA.' Told of this remark, Pfeffer commented: '*Divide et impera*.'

AFTER THE NOVEMBER 1923 PUTSCH fiasco Ernst Röhm had resigned the German Army and become chief of staff of Bolivia's crack First Division in Oruro. Himmler was sorry that Röhm had gone. He had always liked Röhm, for all his perverted ways. They still exchanged the occasional letter. Commenting on a recent revolution which had broken out in Bolivia, when Röhm had taken refuge in the German embassy, Himmler wrote him on January 26, 1930, congratulating him on his adventures in 'Indian territory' and suggesting that by now he was surely an old hand at revolution. As for Röhm's wish to return to the Fatherland shortly, Heini expressed real pleasure, looking forward to cooperation again. He signed off 'with greetings and handshake, your humble and obedient' Himmler.

A few days later, on January 29, he wrote again. Röhm was now in Chile. 'You're getting to be quite a globetrotter,' said Heini, who rarely ventured beyond Bavaria himself. He told Röhm that he was swamped with work, that his days still had, alas, only twenty-four

hours, and that poor old Gregor Strasser had just been given a six-month jail term by a Court 'consisting 100 per cent of Jews' – possibly an exaggeration – and would Röhm pass the hat around wealthier Germans, to raise money for the SS. 'Please note,' he wrote on April 15 to a supporter in Oslo, 'that of all Party organisations the SS needs money the most urgently, so help us to draw some in.'

Technically, Himmler was still deputy chief of the Party's national propaganda directorate, but his work here was receding behind construction of the SS. Handbills announced that he would speak at a mass meeting in Vienna in April 1930 as Reichsführer:

> The hate campaign . . . against the National Socialist minister Dr Frick speaks volumes about the terror that has seized these parliamentary bigwigs and above all the Marxist so-called 'workers' leaders' who claim to be acting for true democracy. They know that their days in power are coming rapidly to a well-deserved end. Come and hear the Reichsführer SS Himmler.

Himmler disclosed to Dr Goebbels in Berlin in March that Hitler was going to appoint him the Party's national director of propaganda. On April 5, the *Völkischer Beobachter* published the last propaganda decree countersigned by Himmler.

WHILE NOT ENTIRELY FREE of his propaganda duties, Himmler could concentrate more on building the SS, because Hitler made him independent of Pfeffer and the SA leadership.

Himmler enhanced the elite nature of his force. He introduced a minimum height for candidates, 182cm, or five feet eight inches, ruled that candidates had to produce a family tree going back to 1750 and innocent of any racial flaw, and he excluded Jews from joining. Pfeffer looked down his nose at the new criteria, and pointed out that many Negroes were over 182cm: 'Height alone does not make the true German,' he said. Soon Himmler began the award of honorary SS ranks: quality, rank, fortune, and social status went into the scale-pan. As the Party swept towards power, there were few who protested at this uninvited accolade – although after the SS had begun to

change its spots some like Rudolf Hess did put up resistance, and actually demanded to have their name removed from the printed *SS-List*. More disturbingly, Himmler imposed a ban on SS men belonging to one church or the other. They were all Germans first, and Catholics or Protestants later, so '*gottgläubig*,' religious, would be sufficient. Little Gudrun was the first child in her school class who entered *gottgläubig* as her religious denomination. He began to introduce his own custom-made rituals and artefacts – honour rings, Yule lanterns, SS daggers, and the like.

If the student fraternities, if the teutonic knights, if the freemasons could get away with such things, using such ritual tomfoolery as a bonding mechanism, then why not this new super-force? The upper SS ranks filled with those displaying the requisite arrogance, men of blue blood or wealth, or aspiring to either. Not a few had been his brothers in the Apollo fraternity; not a few came from the nobility. In May 1930, he chose a new adjutant and chief of staff, Josias Georg Wilhelm Adolf *Erbprinz* zu Waldeck und Pyrmont: four years older than Heini, he was a hereditary prince from an ancient house, tall, with ice-blue eyes. He had joined the SS in 1929, begun working in Himmler's office, and now became his adjutant for the remaining three years before they came to power.

After the Party's provincial and national election successes, men of calibre flocked to the SS, and Himmler could pick and choose. He surrounded himself with tall, handsome, young, and elegant members of the aristocracy. Himmler found it useful to have dukes, counts, and barons, and offered them honorary SS membership.

The split between Himmler's SS and the SA widened that spring and summer, as it widened too between Munich and northern Germany. Hitler had ordered the gauleiters to impose a twenty-pfennig monthly levy on Party members to support their local SA men, unemployed and penniless; Goebbels ordered an additional ten pfennigs in Berlin. The SA watched bitterly as the Party squandered money on lavish automobiles and a new national headquarters building in Munich.

The Party's corporate identity, the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Arbeiterverein*, paid 805,864 Gold marks for the Barlow Palace on May 26, 1930, and turned it over for renovation by local architect

Paul Ludwig Troost. With the purchase of the Brown House – as the building was renamed – Hitler wanted to document that his Party was law-abiding, and here to stay. A British industrialist's family had owned the palace, a rambling hundred-year-old mansion situated in the heart of Munich. Hitler's national directorate already had fifty-six on its staff, outgrowing Schelling Strasse. The money was partly provided by the coal-and-steel magnate Fritz Thyssen.

Heinrich Brüning, the new chancellor, privately sympathised with the Party in significant ways. Two years after his resignation in 1932 he would write secretly of how 'the Jews' alone had profited from the inflation which had brought ruin and misery to Germany, and that there was only one bank not controlled by Jews, some of whom were, in his words, 'utterly corrupt.' He had brought the banks under government scrutiny by 1931, he recalled in this private memoir, but then found it necessary to keep secret the findings of dishonesty 'for fear of provoking anti-Semitic riots.' He discovered that from October 1928 the two largest contributors to the Hitler Party were the general managers of two of the largest Berlin banks, both of Jewish faith, and one of them the leader of Zionism in Germany. So he claimed in a letter to Winston Churchill from his exile in Oxford, in 1937.

Throughout his period in office Brüning would harry the Hitler Party, while still ambivalent about its policies. The government proscribed the Hitler Youth, then banned all (right-wing) political uniforms; on June 11, 1930 Prussia banned the SA's brown-shirts too. Donning uniformly white shirts, one thousand SA men marched two days later in Berlin – with beer-bottle rings as badges.

FACED WITH INTRACTABLE difficulties over the worsening economy, on July 16, 1930 Brüning asked President Paul von Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag. A general election would be held on September 14. Hitler's Party which had twelve Reichstag deputies hoped to increase their number to fifty. Everybody wanted to be on his list of candidates. At a Schelling Strasse conference, he agreed a list of one hundred. Himmler's name was one of those immediately selected.

Goebbels was another. Reichstag deputies were entitled to free first-class rail travel, and they were immune from prosecution. The

latter consideration counted more for Goebbels than for Himmler; Himmler still had a clean police record, and just one 200 Reichsmark ticket outstanding against him; but the sharp-tongued Dr Goebbels had been the target of a campaign of orchestrated legal violence ever since becoming Gauleiter, and there were half a dozen prosecutions for criminal libel and other torts stacked up against him.

A LETTER CAME from Marga, written on July 23, 1930. It had a routine complaint that she had heard nothing from Heini. 'I was in Munich and read about the Dissolution,' she added in passing. Oblivious that this was the Party's best chance yet, she added the toneless comment: 'I am so glad for the Movement.' People were asking when Heini would speak, otherwise – just bills and more bills. 'When are you coming? Just hope you don't drive over with the others to see Hallermann. You're needed here.' Georg Hallermann had been Pfeffer's adjutant since November 1925, and was dying of cancer.

Himmler, however, was now at his busiest. He and his men threw themselves into a nationwide election campaign. The garish red and black of Goebbels posters blared from telegraph poles and billboards. Over the next few weeks they would organise *twenty thousand* election meetings. Martin Mutschmann advised on August 8 that he was planning 1,060 meetings in his gau, Saxony, including 169 major meetings. Himmler scheduled himself to speak at thirty-two meetings in the two months before election day.

His Munich staff were in overall charge of the allocation of speakers. Goebbels wrote on July 31 to Himmler's man Fischer, asking for the big-name speakers like Captain Hermann Göring and Robert Ley for Berlin and 'the use of the election airplane' – an innovation in election warfare. Everywhere, the Party was thinking big. On July 30 Central Franconia, an under-gau, mailed to the Reich Propaganda Director in Munich ('attention: Dr Goebbels') a demand for halls to be booked capable of holding three- to fifteen-thousand. Himmler endorsed these requests with his soon-to-become-familiar initials, HH – four vertical lines with one bar slashed through them – and added notes in pencil or green and red crayon.

Himmler rocketed around Germany in the BMW-Dixi or by train.

He covered Munich. On August 4 we find him announced at eight p.m. in the well-known Solln hostelry 'Zum Hirschen' (The Hart):

> Comrade Farmer Hr'ch Himmler of Waldtrudering, Parliamentary candidate, will speak on The Way Forward and Objectives of National Socialism.

ENTRY WAS FREE, BUT ONE RESTRICTION applied: 'Jews not admitted.' Goebbels laid down the national propaganda line. Avoid the old anti-Judea slogans, as they no longer went down well; attack the decadent Weimar 'System,' call for national unity and suggest that an anti-German conspiracy was behind their country's problems. Halls had to be booked in good time. 'Because of hall-booking problems our local branches (*Ortsgruppen*) have booked for several consecutive days,' wrote Lower Franconia to Himmler on August 5, adding – 'because otherwise the halls were being aborted by the Jews.' The message was rather incoherent but the meaning clear enough.

On the fourteenth, 'National Socialist and Farmer Himmler' spoke at the Marthabräu brewery in Fürstenfeldbruck, a farming community – the beerhall here would hold six hundred. 'Farmers! It's not just about the Party, but your home and farm as well.' His handbills announced, 'Fellow-countrymen! You complain about the hard times, about unemployment, about monstrous taxes,' and proclaimed: 'They promised us the victory of socialism over capitalism, but capitalism now is stronger and more rampant than ever.' Tickets cost twenty pfennigs.

He was due to speak in Landsberg, at the Hotel Kristeiner, on the fifteenth. The local branch suggested a new slogan: 'The Others are Finished: but Hitler is Just Beginning.' (The meeting room is still there today – it seats about forty at small tables.) 'Are you bringing the SS with you,' they asked, as though it could fit into a cab. 'We're going through a difficult patch here in Landsberg,' they apologised. 'The branch is just rebuilding, and consists mainly of SA chaps. Somebody's got to shake up these bourgeois fuddy-duddies. *Heil!*'

General Karl Litzmann, eighty-year-old hero of the 1914 battle of Łódź, was the biggest draw next to Hitler and Gregor Strasser.

Although still only twenty-nine, Himmler's tone was lofty, autocratic, and often downright rude. 'Meetings addressed by General Litzmann are unfortunately not possible,' he replied on August 13. 'Further letters requesting speakers will remain unanswered.' Writing to Thuringia, Himmler adopted a solicitous tone: 'A good hotel is to be provided for our comrade General von [*sic*] Litzmann, and one with an elevator, as the general is unable to climb stairs. A second room is to be provided for the general's companion, with a connecting door to the general's room.' The general was to be given 200 marks in a sealed envelope to cover expenses. 'Since the general is available only every third or fourth day, hotel costs will inevitably, be considerable.'

The Silesians wrote to Himmler on August 11, 1930 that they wanted at least three speeches by the general; they complained that Captain Göring was cancelling all engagements there bar one, as he was not a candidate in Silesia; Göring should be told to honour his engagement, they huffed. 'Otherwise we shall see ourselves obliged to hold Captain Göring liable for our outlay already incurred in publicising the events.' When another speaker cancelled, Pomerania demanded compensation. Himmler's rebuff displayed a certain disregard for civil law: 'If the Rev. von Petersdorf cancelled he certainly has good reason, so a claim for compensation would be without merit.'

Money was short, and local branches often preferred to invite Reichstag deputies. 'If you'd just have a look at *Ostmark*, my dear Comrade Himmler,' Wilhelm Kube explained, 'you will get an idea of the distances involved along the Polish frontier. . . Unfortunately you are supplying me with virtually no Reichstag deputies for September,' he added: 'So, in the interests of the two seats at least which the *Ostmark* can win, may I ask for a few big names to be sent to speak here?' Himmler was unhelpful: 'If there's nothing there, even an Emperor is powerless. I am fresh out of speakers.'

HE HAD SET HIMSELF A PUNISHING pace. He himself was due to speak in Weilheim on August the thirteenth, then Fürstenfeldbruck and Landsberg, followed by Forstenried on the nineteenth, then Bad Tölz and Bruckmühl, with Pasing on the twenty-eighth, and Munich the next day. The printed speaking contracts flowed across his desk.

It was a test of stamina: those were the days before photocopiers, speech writers, and teleprompter screens. Each man had a set speech. Twenty-five marks would be paid to cover speech, travel, bed and breakfast. The speaker was told, 'The fee will be handed to you inconspicuously by the chairman in a sealed envelope after the meeting.'

Himmler's own needs were modest. Told that he'd be speaking to an audience of 1,500 on September 10, 1930 he asked Jena if they could afford a sleeping berth after that: he would have to leave Jena a few minutes after midnight by train so once again he'd be getting no sleep. 'I don't need an overnight room,' he added. 'I'd just be grateful if I could have a snooze that afternoon at some comrade's home or other, or a day-room at an hotel.' He felt he was master of his craft. 'As I don't know what topics you've had speakers on to date,' he offered, 'I'll leave the choice up to you. I can handle any subject.'

It was the first really violent campaign, as the Communists had also recognised that it was make-or-break. On August 23 they stormed an overflowing meeting in Bunzlau, and left three dead. The SA and SS were stretched. In the final fourteen days of the campaign Himmler planned to speak to thirteen audiences; at Schöndorf on September 2, Munich three times (for half an hour each), Altomünster, Wolnzach, then at Waldtrudering. The eve of the election would be the big day, and he strove to ensure that each branch had the best man available. Everybody was asking for Hitler – or Gregor Strasser – to speak.

AT THE ROOT OF THE DISCONTENT was the familiar one, of the proper route to power. 'Ever since 1925,' Himmler stated, reconstructing events from memory for Martin Bormann ten years after the ugly episode which now followed, the Führer had taken the opposite line to Pfeffer and the *Sturmabteilung*. 'The Führer had pleaded, preached, and finally ordained that the National Socialist Party would take power only by legal and democratic methods as prescribed in the Constitution.'

From 1926 on, Himmler continued, Hitler had nothing but difficulties with Pfeffer and his commanders in this respect. In fact, by the summer of 1930 Pfeffer seemed to have lost control. In Berlin, his SA was commanded by Walter Stennes, a former army captain.

Stennes was five years older than Himmler, wounded and decorated in the war – grounds enough for Himmler to dislike him. He had joined the NSDAP in May 1927, briefly commanded the Berlin SA and had then been promoted to supreme SA commander (*Osaf*) 'East' in September 1927, which meant that he nominally commanded twenty-five thousand Brownshirts east of the Elbe.

Stennes disagreed with Hitler on legality. With the election now upon them, he felt secure enough to force a showdown. He sent a demand to Pfeffer, based at Party headquarters in Munich, for at least three of the coming Reichstag seats to go to SA men. Hitler responded that, on the contrary, he was in fact minded to cut back the SA to a size they could afford. Stennes held out for a better deal for his SA men – parliamentary seats and proper payment for their dangerous work protecting the mass meetings.

In Hitler's words, this was 'mutiny and conspiracy.' Stennes took a delegation down to Munich to see Hitler. For two days they waited in the lobby at Schelling Strasse. Ever since the Dissolution, the Party had refused Pfeffer the final list, and given him the run-around. Hess fobbed him off on the telephone, and when Pfeffer came to Munich nobody could find the list, and Hitler was said to be away.

Himmler's loyal SS men barred the way. It was the first time that he had been called upon to make a decision on loyalties, and he did not hesitate. This was precisely why his SS existed. Finally Philipp Bouhler broke it to the SA: other than Hitler's crony Viktor Lutze, there were no SA men listed as candidates, none at all. This faced Pfeffer with an either-or choice, or so he later said. He offered his resignation on August 29, 1930. Hitler did not even reply. As Himmler later sniffed, 'Pfeffer could no longer exorcise the spirits he had summoned up and had to admit his incompetence to the Führer.'

Pfeffer's resignation threat was an embarrassment, but with the election battle into its final two weeks Hitler decided to keep quiet about it. The fact was, as Himmler later recalled it: 'Pfeffer had already resigned,' meaning at the time of the episode which follows.

THE FIRST THAT Munich knew of a problem in Berlin was when Dr Leonardo Conti, the SA's chief physician, warned that Stennes was up to no good.

It was now Saturday, August 30, 1930. Hitler and Himmler were both away from Munich, speaking. Hitler was due to speak in Dessau on Sunday. They had all set off in jovial mood. Himmler shared a car with Hess and the photographer Heinrich Hoffmann; Hitler went separately, driven by Julius Schreck. At the 'Schwarzer Adler' hotel in Bayreuth around 1:20 a.m. – so Himmler recalled – Hess was told that Bouhler had called from Munich. Hess phoned back, and the news was bad: 'In Berlin an SA mutiny has broken out. They have attacked the gau headquarters, and assaulted the SS guard-detail.'

Dr Goebbels hurried back to Berlin to find his headquarters a shambles, furniture wrecked, and bloodstains. Hitler arrived around ten a.m., sallow and unshaven, checked into an hotel near Potsdamer Platz and contacted him. 'The Berlin SA commanders,' recalled Himmler, 'trooped into Dr Goebbels's apartment that afternoon and acted in an unbelievably ill-disciplined manner toward the Führer. SA men were chorusing slogans in the street outside.' That reproach – 'unbelievably ill-disciplined' – speaks volumes about Himmler.

The SA men's complaints were true but untimely: they were unpaid, and nothing was being done to help their battle casualties. Goebbels suggested that Hitler do whatever it took to quieten the SA. Hitler followed this advice. That evening in the Veterans Building, Hitler, escorted by selected SS men, delivered a shrewd address to 'his' SA. He informed them that he had accepted Pfeffer's resignation, and taken over as supreme commander himself. He was not blind to their sacrifices, he assured them, and he gave Stennes his hand, and declared that he would for ever remain true to him. Hitler appealed for unswerving loyalty: 'Let us pray in this hour that nothing can divide us, and that God will help us against the Devil!' he cried. 'Almighty Lord, bless our fight!' – and, the police report observed, as the roars of *Heil* ebbed away, the Führer's hands folded seemingly in prayer. The whole thing was a charade, as Goebbels had recommended.

Hitler decided to let Stennes himself stay on, *pro tem*. He dictated a telegram to Pfeffer: 'I accept your resignation herewith. Please accept my thanks for your services rendered to the movement. I expect you to continue cooperation at my side.' After that he sent a telegram to Bolivia in South America, to the one man whose name would

forthwith ever be associated with the *Sturmabteilung*, and invited him to become his chief of staff: the tubby, scar-faced Ernst Röhm.

For the next few weeks Hitler's SS agents stepped up the surveillance on Stennes. That was what the SS was for, Hitler told him. Goebbels and Himmler accompanied Hitler to the Anhalt station to see the SS unit commanded by Kurt Daluege. The election campaign resumed.

THERE WAS disagreement later about whether Pfeffer had resigned with honour or been sacked as incompetent. The fight had clearly gone out of him. The terminal illness of his adjutant Hallermann had sapped his strength too. Pfeffer always maintained later that, angered by Hitler's evasions, he had made a deliberate choice and quit – that he had faced two options, either to use his army of 100,000 men to destroy the National Socialist Party, or to eat humble pie and accept humiliation in the interests of the nation. Ever since the 1929 Nuremberg rally, he would say, he had expected Hitler to destroy the SA. Now, Hitler had cleverly wrong-footed him by not replying to his resignation until after the mutiny.

As for his replacement by Ernst Röhm, a homosexual, Pfeffer saw that as a deliberate step by Hitler toward destroying the SA. He had perfected the ploy, said Pfeffer, of choosing a personality with a flaw which he could exploit when the time came. Röhm returned to Germany and took up his new position as Chief of Staff of the SA.

THE 1930 ELECTION CAMPAIGN RAN to its conclusion. Unemployment had doubled since January, and would reach 4,380,000 as the year ended. The big mass meetings were once again protected by unarmed squads of the SA and SS. When Hitler came to the Sport Palace on September 10, one hundred thousand people applied for tickets. Hitler cynically attributed the public curiosity to the SA mutiny.

Of 42,982,912 voters, 35,224,499 cast their vote. He had originally hoped for fifty seats, eighty at most. By midnight his Party had already qualified for 103. The final tally showed that 6,406,379 had voted for Hitler's men, entitling them to one hundred and seven seats. Suddenly National Socialists were the second strongest Party. Only the Brownshirts were left disgruntled: the Reichstag deputies

selected by Hitler included thirty-three landowners, manufacturers, and businessmen; thirty-one senior civil servants; nineteen lawyers, doctors, and other professionals; nine former officers, eight salaried staff, and just seven workers. This was democracy with a vengeance.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WAS AMONG THE NEW Reichstag deputies.

Goebbels could not help noting that the SS had behaved impeccably during the whole wretched episode of the Stennes mutiny. Only Göring seems to have disapproved. On the last day of 1930 he remarked to one of Stennes' officers that Hitler had done Stennes a grave injustice; he spoke of 'the nasty double-game being played by a certain Gauleiter,' meaning Goebbels, and he promised that 'he would not hesitate to have Himmler deposed as Reichsführer SS.'

The time for that had however passed.

Heinrich Himmer's position was rapidly becoming impregnable.

He would probably have to rent accommodation in Berlin. From October 13, 1930, when the Reichstag reopened, he would have a real salary, free travel, and immunity from prosecution – not that he believed he would ever need it.

16: *The Cleaner*

INTO THE LIFE of many a man, there steps another person who becomes a second mainspring in his life. Sometimes it is the man's wife, or a mistress, but not this time. Himmler's *alter ego* was another man.

The young man in an immaculate suit who walked down the path in Waldtrudering one day in the summer of 1931 was Reinhard Heydrich, an ex-naval officer. He was tall, athletic, blonde, blue-eyed, with an elongated face and high cheekbones; he had the gait of the expert swordsman that he was. Only twenty-seven, he was engaged to a Nordic blonde, Lina von Osten, daughter of a school teacher on Fehmarn, a German island in the Baltic Sea – they married later that year, on December 26, 1931. He had been required to leave the navy under a cloud that April, and (so Lina later recalled) she had asked an uncle close to the Party to help him find a job. The 'uncle' was Baron Karl von Eberstein, one of the earliest SS officers, who hailed from the same town in eastern Germany as the Heydrich family; Eberstein's mother was Heydrich's godmother.

Eberstein told Himmler about this officer whose naval career had been abruptly ended. Heydrich was a virtuoso on the violin, 'without which,' said Lina, 'I would never have married him.' It was a close thing: Himmler had felt unwell and called off the planned interview.

Lina had put Reinhard on a train to Munich nonetheless.

Lina's view of her husband and the Reichsführer was informed, years later, by an episode on Fehmarn. By then, Heydrich was Hitler's defender of the faith and the master of uniformed *Einsatzkommandos* efficiently cleansing the eastern dominions of enemies.

The phone had rung, and Heydrich had answered – it was his chief, Himmler, calling from afar. Hearing the familiar voice down the phone, Heydrich snapped to attention and clicked his heels. Bowing barely perceptibly, he intoned: 'Yes, Herr Reichsführer!' and then again, 'Jawohl, Herr Reichsführer!' Jealous and disrespectful, Lina mimicked him for their guests' amusement, a group of SS-officers: '*Jawohl, Herr Reichsführer*!' and then in a whisper, '*Jawohl, Herr Reichsführer*! *May I respectfully crawl up into your rectum, Herr Reichsführer? Anything you want, Herr Reichsführer.*'

BOTH MEN WOULD DIE YOUNG. Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich was born in Halle in Central Germany on March 7, 1904; his parents were Bruno Heydrich and Elisabeth. Bruno had married Elisabeth Krantz at a society wedding in Dresden's Catholic Hofkirche. His family came from the Ore Mountains, woodcutters and craftsmen by trade. His grandfather was a musical instrument manufacturer from Meissen in Saxony. Bruno was the second of seven children, all pianists and violinists.

Many authors, including Jewish, would accuse Heydrich gleefully of having Jewish ancestry. After his grandfather's early death – which was after Reinhard's birth – Bruno's mother had *remarried*, to a man variously described as a stonemason or fitter's apprentice, Gustav Robert Süss. Süss was often a Jewish name, but he was not a Jew. That was the sole origin of the rumour about 'Jewish blood', but the unfortunate libel pursued Heydrich all his life. Otto Ohlendorf spoke on one occasion of a *Webfehler*, or 'flawed weft,' one which Heydrich had overcome with great energy. Himmler seems to have believed it, and mocked once that Heydrich 'has got over the Jew within him.'

Elisabeth's father, Professor Eugen Krantz, directed the Dresden Conservatoire, and he established a music school in Halle. Bruno composed religious operas. Upon the death of her parents, Elisabeth

had inherited their considerable wealth, and it was in this comfortable world that Reinhard had been brought up. Bruno Heydrich would die of pneumonia, while Elisabeth, mother of Reinhard, starved to death in the Soviet Zone in 1946.

At sixteen, their son Reinhard had served the Free Corps movement as a messenger. In 1922 he had joined the navy as an officer-candidate, promoted to lieutenant in 1928, and specialising in naval signals and radio. At a rowing club ball in 1930 he had met and offered marriage to Lina von Osten; their engagement disaffected another lady to whom he was already engaged, a girl studying at the Colonial School in Rendsburg. She pursued a 'breach of promise' complaint against him. A naval board heard the case and Heydrich was found guilty of conduct unbecoming. Admiral Erich Raeder, commander in chief, ordered him discharged. 'At the end of April 1931,' summarised Reinhard in a resumé on file in SS personnel records, 'I was cashiered for non-service reasons at the decision of the Reich President and against the recommendation of my superior officer.'

THIS WAS THE OFFICER WHOM HIMMLER recruited in June 1931. The former navy lieutenant joined the Hamburg SA unit, carrying the Party's battles into the Red districts of the sprawling port city.

After the Stennes mutiny, Himmler had notified his SS – with Hitler's approval – that they were 'totally separated' from the SA. On January 14, 1931 Hitler ruled that Himmler was directly subordinate to him. On February 25, 1931 Röhm had created a security service for the SA. Himmler had decided however that he needed to create his own security, 'to form a picture of our Communist, Jewish, masonic, and reactionary enemies,' as he reminisced when he introduced Heydrich's successor in 1943, and he invited applicants to run it. He interviewed one, a retired Major Honinger, but he was unsuccessful. 'On the recommendation of the then *Gruppenführer* von Eberstein,' said Himmler, 'I sent for Naval Lieutenant (ret.) Reinhard Heydrich.'

Himmler recalled more of their first meeting. 'In fact sending for him was really the result of a misunderstanding, and there are not many people who know this. I'd been told that Heydrich was a *Nachrichten* officer' – in German the word can mean variously Signals

or Intelligence. 'To me the *Nachrichten* officer was the guy who brings in *Nachrichten*.' But Heydrich was not in Naval Intelligence, he was just a radio officer.

> He visited me at that time in my little cottage in Waldtrudering, and told me that right away: 'Well, Reichsführer, I'm not the guy you need. I was a radio officer.'
>
> I sized him up. Tall and blond with honest, penetrating, good natured eyes. I said: 'Listen, that doesn't matter, it's all the same to me. Have a seat in that room over there. I'll come back in a quarter of an hour and you write up what you think the NSDAP Intelligence Service should be like.' He did just that, in that quarter of an hour. I said: 'Yes, I agree. Okay, you've got the job.'

Heydrich spent another month with the Hamburg SS, and on August 10, 1931 Himmler moved him into an office in the new Brown House. As for paying him, the Schleswig-Holstein unit agreed to put up eighty marks a month; Himmler diverted another forty marks from his own budget, and Heydrich still drew some pay to come from the navy. 'So SS *Untersturmführer* Heydrich started off with these 120 marks we had all chipped in.'

The other candidate Major Honinger pressed him quite a bit after that, hung around, and even offered him accommodation in his sister's apartment. Honinger had the habit of spelling the name 'Heidrich,' which Lina noticed at the time. A few days later a 'mole' anonymously reported Heydrich's appointment in the *Münchner Post*, and there was that spelling again. Heydrich noticed that spelling too. (A friend related that Heydrich systematically refined his instincts. Once, like a modern-day Sherlock Holmes, he asked ten strangers to form up in plain clothes, and then told each one what he deduced about his profession, origins, and the like, just on the basis of his appearance.)

'I had a *Sturmbannführer* on my staff at that time,' said Himmler in 1943. 'A retired Major H. No sooner had Heydrich started work than the *Münchner Post*, a Social-Democrat rag, blew the secret that we had an Intelligence officer. Heydrich smelt a rat and straightaway –

he had a nose for these things – he said "That's that guy H!"

'H. was actually working for the Munich police, I think getting a hundred marks a month. He hanged himself in his cell,' added Himmler. Lina said later that when Himmler took over the Munich police headquarters in 1933, they found Honinger's name in their agent files: 'He hanged himself in his room,' she innocently recalled.

Room or cell, it would become a sign of the times.

THE MURMURING ABOUT THAT FLAW in the Heydrich line would not go away – rumours about 'Isidore Süss'. In fact Gustav Süss was Protestant, and not a blood relative anyway. Despite that, hostile former naval comrades denounced him to the Gauleiter of Halle-Merseburg, Rudolf Jordan. Heydrich knew only that his brother Heinz had been blackballed by a Dresden duelling fraternity on the same grounds. Jordan in turn complained to Gregor Strasser, the Party's director of organisation, in a letter dated June 6, 1932. It went onto Heydrich's personnel file and Himmler had to investigate.

The investigation cleared him. On June 22, 1932 an affidavit on 'Lieutenant Reinhardt [*sic*] Heydrich' arrived at the SS office, and it confirmed that he was 'clear of all taint of coloured or Jewish blood'.

Stories averring the opposite must surely be discounted. The 'diaries' of Felix Kersten relate that Himmler told him that he reported on all this to Hitler in 1932; the latter advised that as things stood Heydrich would be eternally grateful to the Movement for not having cast him out, and he would obey without question. There is no trace of this in his personnel file, and it is unlikely to have happened in this form.

Lina Heydrich remained her husband's staunch defender. Perhaps she was naïve. Probably she did not know, or want to know, all that she could have. 'When a paper called him the Kremlin's greatest opponent,' she wrote in 1951, 'they hit the nail on the head.' To acknowledge him in later years was to court serious risk. To a Dutch journalist she said that a friend, perhaps Reinhard's adjutant Hans-Hendrik Neumann, had told her that his fellow officers had agreed to shift blame onto those already dead, like her husband. Lina pointed out that they had widows and children too.

She felt that Reinhard's status had been exaggerated – for example,

she said he had rarely reported in person to Hitler until 1941; the written record paints a different picture. To his own police Heydrich said in 1941, 'We are the trash can of the Reich.' As for the cleansing operations conducted by his *Einsatzkommandos* squads, Heydrich referred to himself as being like Hitler's *Putzfrau*, his cleaning lady.

HEYDRICH BEGAN his service in the Brown House in August 1931. The SA supreme command was run on established military lines, and it already had an SA Intelligence service, run by a friend of Himmler's, Count Carl-Leon Du Moulin-Eckart. 'His work must have been unsatisfactory,' said Lina innocently, 'because he disappeared, and was not heard of again.' Heydrich had to construct a new organisation for Himmler, one that was independent of Röhm's SA. He decided to use the British Intelligence service as his model. He began to build a formidable card index on enemies. No detail of the sexual, political, and financial deviations of his targets escaped him or his agents. It was the way that the democracies worked too, like the FBI.

Röhm was surrounding himself at the Brown House with friends (like Du Moulin-Eckart) who were homosexual or perceived as such. Perhaps this was why the obviously heterosexual Heydrich moved his operations into rooms which Himmler rented from a widow, Victoria Edrich, at No. 23 Türken Strasse. The similarity of names led to some confusion. On one occasion Richard Hildebrandt (chief of staff of an SS officer, Sepp Dietrich) rang the widow's doorbell over-insistently and was turned away by the indignant lady, who told him in no uncertain terms that she was not that sort of woman.

Heydrich's service was not yet called the Security Service, SD, but just *Presse-Information*, or PI. Until September 1932 its main activity was recruiting volunteers for the SD and establishing a web of outposts throughout the Reich with the assistance of the regular *Schutzstaffel*, the 'Allgemeine' SS. The men were volunteers, idealists. After Munich's police began snooping on his visitors, in October 1932 Heydrich would move again, taking his home and three co-workers to a house which Himmler had rented in Zuccali Strasse, in the city's Nymphenburg quarter. It was in a dead-end street, which made police snooping less easy. Pay was minimal. Those were hard times for Party

members. The Party would fight another election in the summer of 1932 and its results were not impressive. 'The drifting sand that we had collected drifted off again,' said Himmler, referring to the Party's ordinary members. 'Only our *Schutzstaffel* grew in size.'

A few of the SS men, like Sepp Dietrich and Kurt Daluege, were drawing parliamentary salaries. They voluntarily gave up two-thirds for Heydrich's SD men. When Christmas came the SD men would draw only a few marks each, while Lina brewed a thick broth for them, as Himmler recalled at her husband's funeral. That last Christmas of 1932, he said, the *Sicherheitsdienst* had just enough cash to let their men travel home, but not enough for them to return.

Lina cooked for the little Intelligence household. Occasionally Himmler invited the Heydrichs round, but he found Lina heavy going. Once he took Röhm to Zuccali Strasse to see what this new unit was doing. Lina had bought a box of exploding matches from a carnival supplies store on the Stachus square, in an attempt to smoke out whoever was pilfering her matches from the hallway. Flapping salutes at each other, Himmler and Röhm stomped importantly upstairs and exchanged cigars. Himmler fumbled for a match, and sent someone downstairs to fetch them. The resulting loud detonation added to his mental list of reasons to steer clear of Lina.

'Frau Himmler did not like me either,' she later wrote in a letter.

REINHARD HEYDRICH read neither novels nor tracts on philosophy. He saw gymnastics only as a discipline, a means to achieve perfection. He chose only the most demanding sports, like fencing, which required training and discipline.

His life was unconditional devotion to his duty. He needed no private time. He would have despatches read to him while shaving, and read more during the thirty-minute ride to his office. Later, when everybody moved to Berlin, Heydrich lunched in a small dining room in his office; people with things to report were ordered to join these luncheons. 'Anyway,' he would interrupt, 'cutting to the bottom line, your *point* is?' When he once exposed some nonsense spouted by Himmler, the Reichsführer snapped, 'You and your damned logic!' A journalist recalled that Heydrich's voice struck him as the coldest

he had ever heard. 'His face remained immobile and unemotional.'

One recruit asked what his salary would be. 'Salary?' piped Heydrich. 'So far nobody has starved on my watch.'

He found it most convenient to have a superior like Himmler, who took responsibility for everything. 'He saw well,' said Lina, 'that H. cut a rather poor figure in social circles, but he did not mind.'

He was never dressed improperly. He was efficient, in the idiom taught to the Prussian general staff: 'Seem to be less than you actually are.' (*Mehr Sein als Scheinen*.) If he later had any friendly feelings at all, it was toward men nearer his own age, like the architect Albert Speer, or Herbert Backe of the food ministry. He hated pomp, shunned luxury, avoided being the centre of attention. He smoked little and hardly drank. When he went out, it was always incognito. He could ride along the brink, said Lina – yet stumble on a straw.

As for the quirky views of the Reichsführer, like his rumoured interest in the occult, Heydrich just indulged them. His own imperatives were clear. Orders from Hitler were to be obeyed without question. 'My husband,' said Lina, 'saw in Hitler the one man who could lead the German nation to greatness and glory. Therefore,' she concluded heartlessly, 'it is good that my husband died in 1942. He kept his faith and ideals.' He would have hated the pomp and circumstance of the state funeral that Hitler gave him.

WE SHALL HEAR A LOT OF REINHARD HEYDRICH, which is why we have introduced him at such length. 'There is something about this person that I don't like,' he would tell Lina. Once he had made up his mind, nothing could change it. 'In 1939,' she said, 'Göring intended to arrest my husband. But that was no reason for my husband to hate him.' His life was friendless. 'How can I make friends with any man. I can never tell whether I may have to have him arrested one day!'

17: *Uniform Black*

THREE-QUARTERS OF HEINRICH HIMMLER'S LIFE would soon have passed and, now in his early thirties, he was approaching his prime, and final, years.

His hair was thinning. He had it crew-cut round the back and sides. His poor eyesight had not stopped him reading: he was noticing things around him, and silently reaching conclusions. He had studied how his country's population had been tainted by the ebb and flow of the racial tides which had surged across the defeated Germany. The country had stood for centuries athwart these moving civilisations, but he thought he still saw a glint of the original bedrock proudly surviving, and he began to ponder upon the purity of race and the achievements of the Nordic peoples.

His knowledge was prodigious, but shallow: not as broad as Adolf Hitler's. Himmler's brain moved slower than his tongue. In private conversation, he occasionally struggled for the right word, and then just said 'what's-it,' '*dings*,' or 'thingummy,' instead. Discussing agriculture with Otto Wagener he said: 'I've studied farming, and so far have taken what I've read about it for granted. So if I see a Swabian farmstead of 6,800 morgens [4,200 acres], then that's a fabulous, uh, thingummy, uh, affair.'

THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE REBUILT Brown House, the palatial home of the National Party Directorate, was at No. 45 Brienner Strasse in Munich. It was in an elegant location, just across the street from the Papal Nuntiatur, the Vatican embassy in Bavaria. The portico was of marble. Swastika pylons flanked the bronze door, with the Party motto 'Germany Awake!' Himmler had a suite on the top floor, along with the Party archives. Hitler's study was one floor below: a portrait of American industrialist Henry Ford hung behind the Führer's desk.

Technically, Himmler was still a civilian. 'Reichsführer-SS' was a style, a pay-grade; it was not a military rank, and he had never been a soldier. In an Order dated November 7, 1930 he defined that the primary duty of the SS was policing the Party; the dogs in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* spring to mind.

His relationship with the SA Brownshirts and their flabby commander Ernst Röhm had now begun to itch. Himmler ruled that SA and SS commanders could not issue orders to each other's forces, and on December 1, 1930 he issued SS Order No. 20, quite simply pronouncing 'the total separation' of the SA and SS. Röhm disapproved. On January 14, 1931, just a few days after resuming as Chief of Staff of the SA upon his return from Bolivia, he stipulated that Himmler was in fact his subordinate. On March 10, 1932 Himmler wrote a very servile request to Röhm: 'May I obediently request permission to name the first *Sturm* of the Hamburg 28 Regiment [*Standarte*] after SS-cadet *Henry Kobert*, who was shot by police on February 29, 1932.'

The request was approved. Hitler was pleased to see these two commanders jostling with each other. He specified six weeks later that while the Reichsführer was still subordinate to Röhm, his SS was 'an independent force' and subordinate only to the Reichsführer SS.

Himmler was clear: the SS was his private army. It might swear obedience to Hitler, but he was its commander. The rest was verbiage.

AN ACTIVE SPEAKER AND CAMPAIGNER, Heinrich Himmler had entered the Berlin Reichstag in September 1930. The Party designated him as spokesman on emergency relief for imprisoned comrades.

Police reports in May 1931 noted that, 'He is a zealous public orator for the NSDAP and speaks primarily on agriculture and freemasonry.' He had largely withdrawn from his Gauleiter activities, the police recorded, and was concentrating on his work as Reichsführer.

While his own income was secure, from the Reichstag, Himmler cast about for means of financing the SS. He created two channels of funding, one a secret circle known as the 'Friends of Himmler,' and the other a more populist base of 'sponsorship members.' Each member pledged two, three, or five marks per month. The 'Friends,' of whom we hear more later, wrote rather larger amounts. In 1932 there were already 13,000 sponsors. In 1933 the number had swollen to 170,000, contributing about 357,000 marks; it doubled to 340,000 sponsors in 1934, donating 581,000 marks monthly. In 1939 their journal had a print-run of 365,000 issues, indicating that an even larger number were throwing in their lot with Himmler's men. Their contributions financed the political work of the SS. By 1939 the military SS units (the *Verfügungstruppe*) and guard formations ('Death's Head' or *Totenkopf* units) were government-funded.

Among the 'Friends' were eventually some of the biggest names in industry, many of whom profited from the growing militarisation. These were shrewd men who saw the Hitler movement, and Himmler and his SS, as guarantors of their country in uncertain times. By the autumn of 1931 the SS numbered nearly ten thousand men. On October 2 Himmler wrote to Röhm by internal mail at the Brown House, as formal as ever: 'I respectfully request that flags and standards be issued for the SS this very year, given that we number ten thousand men already issued with SS identity-cards (plus three thousand aspirants), making a total of 13,000 men.'

He lived by such statistics. A dozen years later Himmler's house statistician Dr Richard Korherr – a name we shall invite readers to remember – would highlight the milestones in the growth of this new organism, the SS: from just eight men on November 9, 1925, the day the SS was founded, and around one hundred men on December 31, 1925, it still numbered only 280 on the day Himmler took over as Reichsführer, January 6, 1929. By the end of 1931 it had swollen to 14,964: not bad for Heini's first three years. When the authorities

banned the SS four months later, on April 13, 1932, there were twenty-five thousand who had to take off the still drab SS uniform. It numbered forty-one thousand when the ban was lifted on June 14, 1932, and 52,174 on the day that Hitler won office in January 1933.

After the end of 1938 the SS would almost double in size, especially after 1940: there were 238,159 in the *Allgemeine* SS in 1938 (which we shall translate as 'Regular SS') and its new military arm, the Waffen-SS, formerly the *Verfügungstruppe*; and a combined total of 465,798 SS men in 1942. Their commander throughout was Heinrich Himmler, this extraordinary, unprepossessing man.

HITLER WAS LATER PROUDLY TO REMARK that he had never used his army against his own people.

Anticipating possible internal disturbances, however, he did set up a special force upon which he could rely: In 1933/1934 Himmler established for him the SS *Verfügungstruppe*, roughly 'a force at the disposal' of the Führer – the forerunner of the mighty Waffen SS which was born in December 1940. It was originally envisaged as three *Standarten*, or regiments, for ceremonial duties. They were to be the equivalent of Guards Regiments.

The army's reaction to this private army of supermen was initially contemptuous. General von Fritsch mocked, 'If the Reichsverkehrsminister has his militarily trained *Bahnschutz*, why shouldn't Himmler also play at soldiers?' Mockery would turn to envy as the war turned nasty and the Waffen SS, as the force now became, was the premium force in great demand on every front.

SUBSTANTIAL THOUGH HIMMLER'S FORCE BECAME in numbers, their quality mattered more to him. It was the elite he had planned all along, hated by their enemies. Drawing instinctively on his childhood years in the Catholic church, with its solemn rites and regalia, Himmler began to shape the rituals, impedimenta, and implements of the SS.

He issued rafts of basic orders in 1931 and 1932. Most of them are countersigned by SS-*Oberführer* Josias zu Waldeck, the princely young man he had selected as his personal adjutant in September 1930. The handsome, square-jawed officer, four years Heini's senior,

was heir to the throne of a minor German sovereign principality, but related to several royal houses, which was worth rather more.

Some of the orders were quite mundane, but others were of high historical significance. On January 14, 1932 he announced the creation of SS Air Flights (*Fliegerstürme*), instructing all SS men holding pilot's licences to join them whether or not they owned private planes. Hearing of three fatal motorbike accidents, he reminded SS men to keep up their insurance premiums to the Party treasury. (The unfortunates had been uninsured.) He laid down the proper modes of address between various ranks, and defined: 'SS men are to salute with the arm fully extended, not bent at the elbow.' Prompted no doubt by Heydrich, he warned against secret infiltration by the Communist Party: 'In some cities the Communist Party has expelled trusted Antifa-men so as to inject them as spies into SS units.'

Himmler's pernickety directives to his music corps in July 1931 cover two closely typed pages. Each *Sturmbann* was to have its own marching band with eight side-drums and eight fifes or trumpets; each *Standarte* (regiment) would have its own full-size brass band of twenty-eight men, and three musicians in reserve. The bandleader would have a proper 'thingummy' with which to direct the music and carry a cornet or trumpet too. Himmler wasted no words on what music they should play; but on the uniforms which the bandsmen should wear he commanded every detail, from the side-leathers, trumpet-holders, and music pouches, down to their badge (a lyre), epaulettes, length of their silver tassels, and trimmings on their caps.

He defined that the bandsman was to be an SS man first, and musician second. There should be inspectors of music, with the top SS Inspector (*Musik-Inspizient*) attached to Himmler's staff: he was Julius Schreck, the revered original founder of the SS.

Six years later Himmler was still tidying things up and attending to details. On November 9, 1937 he ordered that the sentries on all their holy places in Munich, like the Brown House, Hitler's residence, and the Ewige Wache – the monument in Königlicher Platz to the 1923 Munich putsch – were to have fixed bayonets; that a particular company commander should hold his dagger less sloppily; and that a new bandolier be purchased for the standard-bearer of the SS

Regiment Deutschland; oh, and that the regiment should not march to the Badenweiler March, which was reserved for Hitler's use.

Reviewing some of Himmler's more intricate instructions on one occasion Hitler commented to his private staff: 'Himmler is a pedant, like his father. Really an ideal man for Reich Minister of Culture,' he added, then remarked: 'But I need him where he is.' There was something of the Scoutmaster in this attention to detail, and something of the paymaster, but still little of the warlord. He was the Reichsführer however, and he knew where he was going.

After the death in Berlin on February 20, 1934 of SS Gruppenführer Siegfried Seidel-Dittmarsch, operations chief (which later became the SS Main Office), Himmler 'rediscovered' his duties as Reichsführer SS and took over again. The man had been an experienced combat veteran and inclined to restrict Himmler to his police duties.

SOME FINE GRAPHIC DESIGNERS HAD JOINED the Party – notably Walter Heck and Karl Diebitsch, later an SS-*Oberführer* and professor. The two 'sig'-runes, forming the letters SS, were flattened off and re-angled and reshaped, with all the expertise that major conglomerates now devote to corporate-image and style. Heck would design some of the officers' badges, like the SS-*Leistungsabzeichen*, or Proficiency Badge, and the special insignia of rank, and the side arms, daggers and scabbards that SS officers would need for their dress uniforms.

Above all it was that uniform for the SS which seized Himmler's attention. It marked them out as the very best, the bravest of the brave. It was the allure of the black uniform that brought many young men into the SS. To use modern parlance, it was 'sharp.' Some sources say it was Diebitsch alone who designed it. Himmler undoubtedly had a hand in it. Some uniform-connoisseurs trace its pocket-design, its waisting, its high-peaked visor cap, its knee-length black riding-boots and other conceits and accessories to the uniforms of the American state police troopers, and particularly those in Massachusetts and New Jersey. Others even detect the influence of Hollywood costume designers. (The chancellor Heinrich Brüning wrote that before 1933 the SS were equipped largely with American-made guns.)

Mass-produced by Germany's finest manufacturers, the jet-black uniform would shape the image of Himmler's men for the remaining years of peace; in time of war field-grey took its place. He guarded over it like a headmaster at a public school. 'I draw strict attention,' he dictated at the end of 1939, 'to the fact that any modification, even the most trivial, to both the black and the grey SS uniform, is forbidden and can be made only with my express permission.'

Among the manufacturers was Hugo Boss, a well-known manufacturer in Württemberg. At a time when it could do no harm, in 1934 and 1935, his company boasted in advertisements that they had supplied the Party uniforms since 1924. Attracted by Hitler's promise to end unemployment, then already running at over five million, Boss had signed up to the Party as recently as April 1931, joining 130,000 others. In the same year he had also become one of the thousands of 'sponsorship members' of Himmler's SS.

The rise of his company, subsequently one of the world's male fashion leaders, was typical: Its sales and profits increased one hundredfold in the next ten years. By 1934 he was a licensed uniform-supplier of the SS, the SA, the Hitler Youth, and many other Party organisations. Concentrating on the best uniforms, insignia, and marching bands, Himmler had found his metier. It simplifies things that our subject still showed little interest in politics. He left that kind of thing to Hitler, the flamboyant aviator Hermann Göring, and Joseph Goebbels in Berlin. He had a single-track mind.

IN JULY 1931 THE DARMSTÄDTER & Nationalbank collapsed, and a run on Germany's banks began. As Brüning's minority government in Berlin floundered, Himmler was elsewhere, dedicating himself to building his SS, seeing them as the Dragon's Teeth of a reborn German nation. In October 1931 the Brüning government was on the verge of collapse. Hitler convened a meeting with the other nationalist groups including the Pan-Germans, Stahlhelm, SA, and Landsbund at Bad Harzburg, to establish a common front against Dr Brüning and bring down the feckless rulers who were steering Germany onto the rocks. The 'Harzburg Front' rally was held on Sunday October 11, 1931. Although his SS put in an appearance, Himmler gave the event

barely a nod, as he scurried around northern Germany brushing up his social contacts with German's grand figures from the past, using his magnificent new adjutant Prinz Waldeck as the turn-key.

He had just turned thirty-one. His boss Ernst Röhm travelled to Harzburg sharing a train compartment with Baron Karl von Eberstein, then of the SA's Organisation Department. Röhm drank quite a bit and showed off Eberstein to the older SA men, and commented on the masculine cut of his Brownshirt, but that was all. As Eberstein later said, on the allegations of homosexuality, 'If he had come onto to me, I would have been out of there like a shot.'

HITLER'S PERFORMANCE AT Harzburg did not impress. One of Himmler's colleagues recalled the unappetising image of their Führer fidgeting on the platform at Harzburg, surrounded by bespectacled, bearded, academic-looking gentlemen, along with the press magnate Dr Alfred Hugenburg, Lieutenant-Colonel Theodor Duesterberg, and Dr Hjalmar Schacht, then delivering a speech stuffed with platitudes – anxious to please and fearing to offend.

The Reichstag reassembled on October 13, 1931 after a seven month absence. Himmler was one of the Party's members, but all walked out two days later. Before leaving the building, he took a sheet of headed Reichstag notepaper and reported, dutiful as ever, to his parents: 'Sorry I couldn't write you from Bad Harzburg. It was much ado what with the rally and everything else, so I didn't get down to Munich.' His ink running out, he switched to pencil: 'Friday before that I drove up to Schwerin with Waldeck, and we stayed at his mother-in-law's, the Grand Duchess of Oldenburg, a delightful old lady. I enclose a view of the castle. Saturday [October 10] I spoke in Rostock, then took the train overnight down to Harzburg (had to change trains six times). You've probably read about Harzburg,' he added diffidently. It evidently bored him.

> In the evening I went on to Brunswick, spent the night there, and on Monday morning back up to Schwerin. On Tuesday morning to Berlin for the Reichstag [opening], arrived midday. This evening Friday [the sixteenth] I'm at the Reichstag. Brüning

has just wangled a majority of 24 votes.

I spent one evening together with little Ernst [his younger brother]. Now I'm off to the Brunswick rally.

Lots and lots of hugs and kisses, your Heini.

HIMMLER'S VISION FOUND RESONANCE IN THE aristocracy. Eventually there would be scarcely a princely house which did not enlist one of its sons in his SS. Dukes, barons, and minor royalty like Prince Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld joined SS-units, particularly the cavalry, the *Reiter* SS. (Bernhard resigned in 1936 to marry Princess Juliana, who became Queen of the Netherlands, and judges at Nuremberg would later define that the *Reiter* SS was a criminal organisation – but helpfully added that was only from 1937 onward.)

These notables did not have to join the Party to become a member of Himmler's SS. Appointed as the chief of Himmler's race office, Richard Walther Darré attended only one SS function in his life, but he was a bystander, a privileged onlooker. Many a Reich minister found himself spooned into the SS after the 'seizure of power' in 1933; the personnel files contain many a discreet letter to Himmler's staff asking to have their names expunged from the official SS *Rangliste.*

There was something pan-European about the SS and its princes. Eventually fourteen Hesses and nine Coburgs joined this new knighthood. The Hesse's were not averse to the elegant black uniform; they liked too being in an inner circle. Philipp von Hesse joined in 1930; Christoph von Hesse, who shortly became head of the secret Intelligence agency, the *Forschungsamt,* in 1932. He married Princess Sophie of Greece, the youngest sister of Britain's Duke of Edinburgh; in fact Prince Philip's four sisters all lived in Hitler's Reich throughout the coming war, they joined the Party and married German princes, gauleiters, or SS generals – which may explain why his family was under-represented at Westminster Abbey when he married Princess Elizabeth, later H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, in November 1947.

A LETTER REACHED HEINRICH HIMMLER IN BERLIN soon after Harzburg from Marga. Little had changed in the four years, but their letters were inevitably cooler. Her life revolved around her daughter,

Gudrun. They still had debts, and she nagged him in Berlin about them. 'Be a good fellow,' she wrote on October 11, 'and bring me a plank for the window for my cactus plants. You ought to drive over to Papa's. Think of fruit.'

His modestly exalted status as a Reichstag member became known. Elfriede (probably Elfriede Reifschneider; Himmler often lived with her and her husband when in Berlin) wanted to visit, as did Gerhard Eisenschmid of Zossen, a 'brother' in the Apollo fraternity: 'Suddenly he knows you.' Then more trivia: 'Thursday I'll kill my geese, I've got no feed for them, how will Harzburg play out?' she asked in the same breath. 'And what happens if it doesn't? I hope you write soon.' 'How I'd like to be there at all these big events,' she sighed, putting aside her knitting. 'I still hope they pull it off soon. The radio says that Hitler and Göhring [*sic*] went off to see Hindenburg. What was that about? I did my pullover wrong and I've had to unravel it –,' and so she chattered on.

Nothing came of Harzburg. The two top Party men still made insufficient impression on President Hindenburg. In Himmler's absence, the little household in Waldtrudering became a meeting point, so Marga told him on November 14, 1931, and she sat listening in to their chatter. 'Watch out for your friends. I'll tell you everything verbally.' 'I hope all this speaking is not putting too much strain on you,' she wrote two weeks later. Using words that may well have caused the car-owner Heini to wince, as he still loved that Dixi, she added that she had 'scraped the worst of the muck' off their car.

CACTUS PLANTS, DROPPED stitches, killing geese: Heinrich Himmler was now above these things. He had other fish to fry. Immersing himself in ancient tomes on archeology and prehistoric tribes, plucking leather-bound volumes from the shelves and underscoring their wise words, reading essays like Baron Evola's 'Restoration of the West on the Basis of the Original Aryan Spirit,' and writing in the margins, he had bent himself to restoring an entire race.

Baron Karl von Eberstein was adjutant at SA and SS headquarters in Weimar when Himmler came in 1930 to check out that his SS officers in Thuringia understood the importance of race. 'He ran

his eye over us,' Eberstein recalled, describing this 'rather insulting' visit – 'the way you might appraise a pedigree horse.' Learning that Eberstein's wife hailed from Saxony, Himmler made remarked that Saxons were good at tinplate and lace.

'He's an odd type,' remarked Eberstein to his *Oberführer*, and they agreed that it was curious that Adolf Hitler had chosen him.

HIMMLER HOWEVER WAS IN NO doubt. He was sure he could master it. Somehow he would have to isolate the pure Aryan gene, like separating a rare isotope. It would enrage his enemies if he succeeded. He could enrich this new nation, one man at a time, sinew by sinew; it would call for men of the highest racial purity, but it was not impossible.

He alone would know when his SS had achieved the critical mass.

18: *Enter Karl Wolff*

'I KNOW,' BOASTED HIMMLER LATER, WITH a hint of *ennui*, 'there are many people in Germany who feel sick in the pit of their stomach at the sight of our black uniform. We understand this, and we do not expect to be loved.' He was speaking five years later, in 1936. 'All those who have Germany at heart,' he continued, 'will and should respect us. All those who have a bad conscience . . . should fear us. For these people we have constructed an organisation called the *Sicherheitsdienst* [security service], and likewise . . . the secret state police.'

Himmler embarked on his mission to create an elite force. He made it mandatory for SS men to seek his permission before marrying, submitting photographs and full details – like whether the fiancée was *kinderlieb* (fond of children), or whether there was a family history of alcoholism or suicide. 'Himmler informed me he is determined on the SS marriage thing, whatever the consequences,' recorded Darré in November 1931, and added that they set up a Scandinavian branch of the SS to scout for Nordic girls. Himmler issued this Marriage Order on January 8, 1932, backdated to the last day of 1931. It was his most extraordinary Order yet: 'The SS is quite clear that with this order we are taking a step of enormous significance.'

It revealed his single-mindedness on race. As from January 1 his SS men, this 'specially selected body of men defined as Nordic types,'

must seek permission to marry, and it would depend on racial purity. At any sign of truculence – if the SS man defied Himmler's veto – he would be cast out of the SS. Let others mock, the Reichsführer concluded this order; let others scoff, or misunderstand. That mattered not: 'The future belongs to us.' Each SS officer now had to submit a mandatory genealogical chart, going back for two centuries into his family history. Its first paragraph dictated:

> The genealogy *must* list all ancestors of the SS man and/or his bride or betrothed as far back as those born on or before January 1, 1800. For SS officers, data must go back to 1750 if possible.

In another era, such interference in private matters might have seen a commander hounded out of office, to the Homeric laughter of his men. In fact it was an Order of great psychological magnetism. The elite SS, which had been started as a crude bodyguard for Hitler, was suddenly to become something more formidable, more monumental. Henceforth its roots would seem to extend back for two centuries, and into the future as far as the human eye could behold.

THE MARRIAGE ORDER caused much difficulty. Teams of genealogists in the newly created Race Agency (*Rassenamt*, later the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*) drilled into church and municipal archives, hitting many an unsuspected rock on the way. Himmler appointed as first chief of the agency his friend and admirer Darré. As the loftiest Party men crowded into Himmler's ranks, some were found to be not without blemish. He was relentless: there could be no compromise. He was the eye of the needle; he read every application. One mediæval Jew had wrought havoc in the villages: the oats he had sown haunted applicant after applicant for the SS, two centuries after the Jew's death. In 1940 Himmler tossed an enlisted man out of the SS, stating that he would not tolerate any man with a Jewish ancestor born after the Thirty Years War (which ended in 1648).

Among those caught in Himmler's net was Hitler's own chauffeur, Emil Maurice. In 1935 he was SS Member No. 2. His daring in a Hofbräuhaus battle in November 1921 had earned him a mention

in *Mein Kampf*, and Himmler had just promoted him to SS *Standartenführer* (colonel) for his bravery in arresting 'several mutineers' during the events of June 30, 1934 about which we have still to hear – and in 1935 Emil-Jules Wilhelm Maurice became engaged to Hedwig Ploetz – Hitler even offered his Munich apartment for the wedding. Before that day, May 11, like any other SS officer, Maurice had to produce an Aryan Certificate, and this revealed Jewish ancestry. His grandfather was actually buried in a Jewish cemetery in Hamburg.

Heinrich Himmler had never liked the man. An episode still rankled from earlier, when Emil Maurice and Julius Schreck had briefly expelled Himmler from the original SS for violating a Hitler ban on drills. Thrilled by the discovery that Maurice was a Jew, Himmler demanded his expulsion from the Party and SS.

Hitler would not hear of expelling him, and on August 31 Himmler dictated this sour note for the files:

1. According to his own genealogical chart, SS *Standartenführer* Emil Maurice is without doubt not of Aryan descent;
2. On the occasion of the nuptials of SS *Standartenführer* Maurice, at which he had to produce his genealogical chart, I made my view clear to the Führer that Maurice must resign from the SS;
3. The Führer has ruled that in this one exceptional case, both Maurice and his siblings may remain in the SS, because he was his very first companion and because he and . . . the entire Maurice family served with rare courage and devotion in the earliest and hardest years of the movement.

Before ordering this note placed on the secret files, Himmler added a furious commentary: 'I rule that neither may Maurice be inscribed in the roll of the SS, nor may any subsequent issue of the Maurice family enlist.' He decreed further that the Führer alone had had this right to make such an exception.

IT WAS AN ALTERCATION WHICH HISTORY should not overlook. It would not be the only time that Hitler held out his hand to protect a Jew threatened by a Himmler edict. For Hitler, the fight against Judea

had effectively ended when he entered the Reich Chancellery.

A few days after Himmler issued the Marriage Order, on January 25, 1932, Hitler put him in charge of security against possible Communist or police invasions at the Brown House. The SS man had to meet rigorous standards – including physical appearance, and a minimum height of 1.80 metres. Himmler disdained short men (he would describe the stunted little major-general Helmuth Stieff, one of the July 1944 plotters, as a 'poison dwarf' and poor copy of the King of Italy). Having his own men on the main doors of the Brown House enabled Himmler to grab for the SS those applicants who seemed fittest and best: his officers knew what types to look out for.

While Röhm and the vulgar SA commanders were more interested in numbers, Himmler wanted only the best for his SS – and that meant the Nordic type – the 'blond, blue-eyed, narrow-skulled, slim racial type,' as Heydrich's deputy Werner Best said. If suitable men walked in, intending to join Röhm's SA Brownshirts, SS recruiters nabbed them, arguing they had the finer uniform, and were the guardians of Hitler. As Himmler himself later said: 'We started with the principles of plant selection and then proceeded to weed out the men whom we did not think we could use for the build-up of the SS.'

There were many who silently mocked that Himmler, and even Hitler, fell outside the ideal criteria: Himmler, observed Best, belonged absolutely to the swarthy, round-headed, stocky 'eastern' type, with nary a hint of 'westerner.' Himmler laughed: 'The skull may be round, but it can still have an oblong brain tucked inside it.' At a dinner at the Japanese embassy, he lectured Best's wife on Nordic qualities. 'That's pretty dangerous stuff,' she stoutly retorted. 'Because if we put it into practice we'd lose our entire leadership – the Führer himself; you, Herr Himmler; Dr Goebbels, and quite a lot more.' She added: 'The only ones left would be fellows like Herr Lutze.' Himmler regarded the fair-haired Viktor Lutze as a nonentity.

THROUGH THAT STREET DOOR of the Brown House in 1931 sauntered Karl Wolff, a tall, lean, slightly bewildered young man with a beaky nose and keen eyes. Wolff had joined the Party in July 1931. He told the SS recruiters of his war decorations, and of his active service

as a lieutenant in a Guards regiment – distinctions which he never failed to mention. Visiting an SS *Sturm*, roughly a platoon, he was impressed by the comrades he found. He signed up. It was October 7, 1931, Himmler's birthday. Wolff was given SS number 14,235 and joined the 1st SS *Standarte* in Munich, based in the Brown House. He soon took over command of No. 88 *Sturm*.

Born on May 13, 1900, Karl Wolff was a few months older than Himmler. The archives hold his own contemporary account of their first encounter. Röhm had set up a 'Reichsführer School' in an empty factory building in Schwanthaler Strasse; a fellow SS officer, Richard Hildebrandt, suggested that they attend its first course, at the end of January 1932. In his mind's eye, Wolff wrote at the time, he could see his wife wringing her hands, but he was following his instinct.

The Reichsführer School had three floors, with a dormitory for the ninety-five participants, among them a Dane and a Norwegian. 'And then,' recalled Wolff, 'came the big moment, as the Reichsführer arrived and inspected our line-up for the first time in the courtyard.' To general surprise, Himmler was wearing not just his quaint pince-nez eyeglasses, but the new black 'Hugo Boss' SS uniform; nobody had seen it before. Wolff was enthralled – by Himmler, by that uniform and by the history he told 'of world revolution, the Jews, the Freemasons, Christianity and the problems of race.'

On the final evening of the course, the last streetcar had gone and Wolff prepared to walk home with SS *Standartenführer* Heinrich Höflich. They had less than five marks between them – not enough for a cab. Himmler offered affably to drive them home before motoring on to Waldtrudering. He gave Wolff the pet name 'Wölfchen.'

'WÖLFCHEN' FAWNED ON HIMMLER. He wrote to Himmler in 1939 warbling that he personified all that was 'good, beautiful, and manly, and everything for which it seems worthwhile striving.' 'All we are today,' Wolff added, 'we owe to you and the Führer.'

The ultimate SS aim was to bring together all the Germanic races in Europe, as a counterweight to the Yellow Peril looming in Asia. 'I recall the Reichsführer calculating,' wrote Wolff, 'that within a century or two there would be one billion in these new Mongol and

coloured hordes bearing down upon the dying Europe, and that they would eventually wash us all away.' Misgivings would come to Wolff only later. 'Fate has placed me at the side of the Reichsführer SS as his closest colleague,' he wrote. 'I admire him unconditionally, and I believe profoundly in his historic mission.'

So he sallied forth along his path which would ultimately wend its way through the charnel houses of OPERATION REINHARDT, into the Führer's secret lair, and eventually the Swiss bureau of the OSS.

IN MAY 1945 WOLFF HAD DUTIFUL SECOND THOUGHTS as, far away across Europe, Himmler's life ticked to its violent end. 'In the beginning,' Wolff would reminisce in British captivity, 'we had very decent and gifted chaps in the SS – men who really could have become the nobility of a new society. . . Now the decent men in the SS have got to suffer for these things like the concentration camps and gas-chambers and crematories.' It was a belated, even dishonest, insight.

From that beginning in 1931, Wolff spiralled effortlessly upwards. He was Aryan, suave, and diplomatic. He established a bosom friendship with Reinhard Heydrich; each became godfather to the other's son. Very belatedly put on trial in the 1960s, Wolff assessed Heydrich thus: 'He was a man with a razor-sharp mind, but basically a gentle man, who compensated by displaying an outward hardness. That was rather the same with Himmler too.' The British returned him to Germany for trial but the Americans had done a deal with Wolff and hid him away in an asylum, and turned a deaf ear on the 'war-crimes' investigators.

While other SS generals remained loyal to their former chief well beyond the end, Wolff suspected in 1945 that somewhere a rope was being braided for him. In March 1945 he anticipated the inevitable by going behind both Hitler and Himmler, and contacting Allen Dulles, the OSS chief in Switzerland, offering to sell out the entire Axis front in northern Italy. It was Dulles who would ultimately spare Wolff from the U.S. Army gibbet which snared most of his colleagues. This was a treachery which Wolff laboured to keep secret. Upon learning of a scathing post-war news report in the *Schwäbische Donauzeitung*,

he expressed concern to American interrogators that their secret deal might go down in history as 'another Twentieth of July,' as he put it – an act of betrayal; quite so. Obligingly, he volunteered to interrogators the names of all the financial 'Friends of Himmler,' adding smugly: 'I am providing these names to you although I know that the members' list is one of the few things that were supposed to be deleted from the Reichsführer's files.' Industrialist Fritz Kranefuss, who ran the 'Friends,' had destroyed all the files and taken his own life to keep its secrets. Wolff rated his own life more dearly. In captivity, he became unbalanced and one interrogator, Norbert Barr, concluded: 'Although subject is without doubt a mental case, his memory is at times excellent and some of the information he gives of value.'

Again, quite so. 'Wölfchen' survived to die in his bed in 1984. When he telegraphed 500 Deutschmarks to Gudrun in 1961, Himmler's perceptive daughter, then in her thirties, sent the donation back, marked '*refused*'.

THE PARADOX WAS THAT THE *LOWER* THE man ranked in Himmler's entourage, the less likely he was to survive in Soviet captivity. The SS elite returned ten years after the war from Russia to Germany, and they were swiftly hired by the British, American, and German intelligence services. They were the very best at their trade.

For ten years Karl Wolff had been an expert at survival; he was cunning, imaginative, and flexible. Taken prisoner by the British, he said this about Himmler who was at the time still on the run:

> All his friendships went to pieces, every single one. . . He became too powerful, and just as he aped the Führer in more or less everything, he then began to use force and take advantage of his power. He was responsible for fantastic instances of ingratitude.
>
> When he broke even with me [in 1943], it was all over. I told him, or rather I had him told by a third person, that even if we won the war, the Reichsführer would find himself completely isolated – or at least surrounded only by a few desperadoes.

Here is his description of a photo of young Himmler during the

1923 putsch, manning Röhm's barricade in Munich: 'When he was scared, he always hunched his shoulders like a tortoise and his neck vanished and only his head poked out.' In the picture, claimed Wolff, Heini was wearing army goggles, 'devoid of the slightest trace of fashion or chic.' The photo is well-known, and lacks all these details.

As the shadow of the gallows receded, Wolff's feelings towards Himmler changed. He now described him as a capable organiser, a trained estate manager, a mixture of the corporal and the schoolmaster. 'His religiousness is best regarded as a reverence for ancestors and grandchildren, an awe of blood and race, and the responsibility each individual must feel toward his line.'

Himmler did benefit from the element of continuity provided by Wolff until 1943. Wolff eventually became Himmler's chief of staff and then Himmler's liaison officer to Hitler. He suggested to interrogators that he seldom saw the Reichsführer. The archives tell us otherwise. They travelled, ate, and worked together. He is there when Himmler visits a Jewish household in the Ukraine, and standing at his side a day or two later, in August 1941, watching an execution at Minsk; when he inspects sites like the sprawling industrial complex at Auschwitz, Wolff's tailored figure shares the camera-frame.

THE HUMDRUM WORLD FROM which Himmler had extracted Marga seemed far away. Occasionally she joined him in Berlin. In March 1932, as he charged around North Germany in yet another election campaign, she returned to Waldtrudering and reported that her younger sister Lydia Boden, a seamstress, was coming and that Hans Bastian, their driver, would be fetching her: 'Last night people plastered our entire fence with our posters.'

She was worried she might be pregnant again, because she wrote him on March 20, using appropriate circumlocutions: 'It's the twentieth today, and still nothing. What then? I just can't stop thinking about it.' Heini wanted a son, but she veered off topic onto Rudolf Hess, who had written to a baron without the proper mode of address, and woes about two dozen eggs delivered for hatching, but she had found only twenty-three and ten of the chicks had died. Perhaps she was broody too, as she sighed: '*Ach*, my tiny love, what's up with me?'

One evening in April 1932 the evening radio news told her that the Reichstag was dissolving on May 9, so she proposed to travel north to spend more time with him. 'Perhaps at Whitsun we could make a little trip into the countryside around B., that would be so lovely. . .'

The family albums contain several photos of Heini visiting his family in July and September 1932. Out of that dashing uniform, he cut a sorrier figure, with his pince-nez eyeglasses, sagging physique, and much-worn leather pants and Tyrol hat. He wears the familiar jovial grin in snapshots. Marga herself is seldom smiling. Gudrun, clutching a new clown doll, has the kind of wary look on her face which toddlers adopt when a father visits – one who is seldom there.

THAT SUMMER OF 1932 the black uniform was introduced throughout the SS. All those who joined recall the grinding poverty before the wheel finally brought Hitler to power. Violence ruled the streets and took an increasing toll of life; but the National Socialists were about to become the largest Party. President Hindenburg still backed the chancellor, Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party. His interior minister banned the SA and SS in April 1932; angry at this prejudice against the right, Hindenburg asked Brüning for his resignation.

Himmler persuaded his father to read up on their Party's Führer. He (or Marga) sent round volume two of *Mein Kampf*, and the old man finished reading it at the end of May 1932. He did not warm to everything Hitler had written, where it conflicted with his own views on the educational system. Hitler felt it absurd that hundreds of thousands of well-educated priests had to remain celibate, while the government could not prevent ignorant and racially marginal parents from reproducing. Where Hitler had warned that 'silly' bourgeois elements had failed to understand why they must take up arms against evil, the professor wrote the word 'Italy!' in the margin.

Setting *Mein Kampf* aside, Gebhard Himmler inscribed these words on its last page, for his son to read: 'Read to the end with fervent interest and sincere admiration of this man, June 2, 1932. *Himmler.*'

Better late than never. Still, it seemed an endorsement of what his son was doing.

19: *The Problem with Röhm*

AS THE CHIEF OF STAFF Ernst Röhm rebuilt the SA, it seemed obvious what criterion he was applying: only homosexuals need apply.

The controversy had boiled over. The Munich prosecutor had been hoping to nail Röhm with homosexual activity and on July 10, 1931 the Berlin police had seized letters he had written to a friend, Dr Karl-Günther Heimsoth. The police slid them into the hands of a left-wing journalist, Dr Helmut Klotz (a renegade SA officer who had participated in the 1923 putsch). Klotz printed 300,000 copies of a brochure, 'Three of Röhm's Letters to Dr Heimsoth' – *Drei Briefe Röhms an Dr Heimsoth*. The letters reeked of homosexual torments and desires ('every woman is an abomination'). The *Münchner Post* and *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* printed them on March 7, 1932.

Homosexual activity was a criminal offence in most civilised countries including Germany, but Hitler did nothing. He spoke of *Nibelungentreue*, the Wagnerian comradeship of man for man.

The Party refused to buy into that. Himmler stayed silent on the sticky controversy. He was aware of the numerical weakness of the SS, but with a general election imminent Hitler's other lieutenants were aghast. On March 24, 1932 Konstantin Hierl, who had been appointed deputy director of Party organisation, signed a letter of protest to 'Herr Hitler': 'Party-comrade [Walter] Buch and Dr Frick

have already apprised you of the grave concerns which oppress not only myself but *all other* Office Holders *à propos* the Röhm Letters.' The enemy, warned Hierl, would make 'devastating' use of them; nor were old-fashioned Stahlhelm men or *Deutsch–Nationale* conservatives likely to be amused. Out of friendship for Röhm, Hitler was risking alienating tens of thousands.

Hitler did nothing. The Party Treasurer, Xaver Schwarz, began an angry dossier on this perversion threatening their Movement. The word was that no boy attending one particular grammar school in Munich was safe from Röhm's scouts, who lingered outside its gates. Walter Buch, chief of the Party Court, tackled Hitler direct. He had received complaints from parents. Buch urged him to replace Röhm with somebody, preferably married and with children, 'a man like [Viktor] Lutze.' Hitler replied that Röhm was denying the allegations.

Walter Buch actually hired a hit-man to kill Röhm and four homosexual colleagues before they could do more damage. The chosen hit-man, Emil Traugott Danzeisen, delegated the job to a former architect, Emil Karl Horn; Horn ratted out to one of the intended victims, Count Dr Carl-Leon Du Moulin Eckart, who duly informed the police, and six-month sentences were handed down all round. Himmler's position was awkward. Du Moulin was, his diary shows, a friend at the time of the 1923 putsch, and Röhm was his superior. He intervened with Buch on Röhm's behalf.

Martin Bormann wrote on October 5, 1932, to Hess: 'If the Führer retains this man, then I and countless others no longer understand him.' Hitler's puzzling response was to order a stop to the tongue-wagging. 'The SA isn't a finishing school for oldest daughters,' he reminded them all, 'but a body of roughnecks and pugilists.'

THE REICHSFÜHRER WAS content to merge into the shadows, and leave the glory to Röhm and the power to his Führer. When a SA leader, Walter Stennes, took Hitler to court in January 1932, even the Jewish journalists crowding the Press benches were impressed by the figure Hitler cut. 'I must note right away that the impression Hitler makes is immeasurably better than expected,' wrote Gershon Savitt, the Berlin correspondent for *Ha'aretz*, a Mandate-Palestine

Hebrew paper. 'He is 46, but looks younger. . . Self-satisfaction and self-confidence are apparent in his movements; he acts and feels as if he himself is a "star," because the world's eyes are upon him and this pleases him.'

Heinrich Himmler would attract little press attention. To the public at large, he was still an unknown quantity. When the *Daily Express* invited Röhm, the SA chief, to dinner in 1932, the newspaper's Berlin stringer Selkirk Panton glimpsed the 'Japanese-like' figure of Himmler standing in the background, blinking through his pince-nez. Panton recalled the scene thirteen years later as he reviewed the lifeless man lying on that front-room floor in Lüneburg.

ON THE LAST DAY OF JULY 1932 THE NEW ELECTION swept Hitler's Party to an even stronger position in the Reichstag. Over eighty percent turned out to vote. Hitler's candidates won 37·3 percent of their votes, which made his the largest Party with 230 seats. Göring was appointed Speaker (*Reichstagspräsident*). The Communists also gained seats.

Himmler took no part in the inner counsels in Berlin: his power-base was elsewhere, Munich. He nursed none of the ambitions that fired Dr Goebbels and others. He left it to Hitler, Göring, Franz von Papen, and Kurt von Schleicher to posture on the Berlin stage. He was no politician; he was an administrator, an organiser, and perhaps something of a would-be soldier too.

Back in Munich, Himmler's men like Reinhard Heydrich prepared for power in their own way. Heydrich had founded a new Security Service, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), soon after the government lifted the ban on the SA and SS in June 1932. He had started with a few men from his own Intelligence section. Initially the SD central office was in Munich.

Personnel files suggest that in 1932 the embryonic SD had about thirty members, with ninety-four more in 1933 and two hundred added in 1934. Many were experts in their own field. What Heydrich achieved in these last months before coming to power, given only a shoestring budget, was formidable. Unpaid, or underpaid, idealists trickled into the SD – each one a volunteer, and most of them working

for the SD part-time. His few salaried colleagues survived on 150 marks a month or less. With these men he spun a network of SD *Aussenstellen*, or field-offices, across Germany, and continued work on the great card-index, his vital weapon, over the next ten years.

Himmler had done well in selecting this young man as his principal lieutenant. Himmler defined the SD uniform too, the regulation SS black, but distinguished by a discreet patch on their left cuff with the embroidered letters SD. These SD initiates were still honourable men – but that would change as time passed.

BY THE SUMMER OF 1932 the structure of this Intelligence network was so far completed, with five regional SD Groups (North, South, East, West, and South-East), that Himmler and Heydrich were able to address a secret inaugural meeting. They called in all the heads of the field offices on September 11, 1932. 'They assured us,' recalled Paul Leffler, of the SD-Group East, 'that the SD was to become the main intelligence centre.'

Until they came to power, the SD's job would be to gather data on the aims, methods, and plans of their opponents; more generally, they were to report on 'anything of interest'. The aim was, said Heydrich on this occasion, for the SD to become an institution like the greatly admired British Intelligence Service or the French Deuxième Bureau. 'Again and again,' recalled Leffler afterwards, 'they stressed their intention to employ only men of faultless character.'

The authorities watched closely over the emergence of this unusual Intelligence agency but felt they could do nothing, so long as everything stayed within the law.

There was no hint of any later criminality.

20: *Torchlight parade*

HITLER'S BROWN TIDE SWIRLED ever closer to the Reich Chancellery that winter of 1932. In a blizzard of betrayals, bribes, and blackmail he finally stepped through that Chancellery doorway. Writing it up in his diary on January 30, 1933 Richard Walther Darré said that little had they – Frick, Hess, and the rest – dared hope that Hitler might actually be appointed Reich Chancellor: 'Himmler and Röhm then come in and mention casually, "Hitler has already been sworn in." We all just laugh out loud.' Many assumed that the Hitler government was just a flash in the pan; but as he entered the building Hitler muttered sotto voce: 'No power on earth will get me out of this building alive!'

It was an untidy victory, which left many loose ends. With the Left still crowding the Reichstag, Hitler did not have absolute power. For a year after this electoral tsunami, eddies and undercurrents persisted, leaving whirlpools of disorder: the rule of law no longer obtained, and many victims vanished into the darkness. Ernst Röhm's hordes of *déclassé* SA militiamen began a reign of terror. Their 'auxiliary police' ('*Hilfspolizei*') arrested people at whim; secret dungeons, torture rooms, and holding-camps sprang up across Germany.

The receding storm-surge left pockets of Germany in other hands – unresolved. Bavaria, after Prussia the largest power, was controlled by the Bavarian People's Party, the BVP, a minority

government since 1930. The prime minister was Heinrich Held, sixty-five years old, and he held out against *Gleichschaltung*, 'synchronisation' of the provinces, for as long as he could.

ON THE NIGHT that Hitler came to power, the serried ranks of the SA and SS, marching twenty abreast and carrying blazing torches, tramped through the Brandenburg Gate and spilled out onto the Unter den Linden boulevard. Himmler marched at the head of his contingent with Reinhard Heydrich perhaps at his side – 'I *think*,' Himmler said, recalling it after Heydrich had gone.

More likely Heydrich was already at his desk, working up the lists of enemies to be neutralised. Carl Severing, the outgoing Prussian minister of the interior, had long prepared such lists. Heydrich had left his pregnant wife Lina behind in Munich to pack furniture for Berlin. Himmler brought the SD headquarters to a building in Eichenallee. 'Himmler and Heydrich,' recalled Heinz Jost, 'had agreed that the several regional German police forces must be merged into a single "Reichspolizei" under their control.'

Hitler's ministers were in the minority. He was held back by the 'Old Gang' politicians in his Cabinet as part of the deal he had struck with Hindenburg. If Himmler had expected some immediate reward for ten years of loyalty, he was disappointed. Himmler went back to Munich. Here for many weeks he agitated – even spreading rumours of a plot against Hitler to document his own indispensability. Later he had no need to fabricate, as the Communists made half a dozen attempts on Hitler's life that first year alone. Since November 1932, mere membership of the KPD, the Communist Party, counted as high treason. Steered by Moscow and the Comintern, the Communists were experts in subversion; they had gone underground.

THE BLOODY STREET battles continued for many months. A gang of Communists ambushed and shot SS *Scharführer* Kurt von der Ahé in a Berlin street on February 19, 1933. Having always wanted a son, Himmler adopted one of the murdered Ahé's two orphans, five-year old Gerhard. 'We've adopted a boy,' he wrote to Louise Niedermeyer, perhaps a domestic, 'as we unfortunately don't have one of our own.'

'An alert kid. Püppi is really pleased,' wrote Marga in her baby-diary: 'She consoles him when he cries that he wants to go home.'

Heini soon lost interest in him and sent him to a boarding school. 'I only know,' Karl Wolff was heard to remark about the foster-son, 'that he was accorded the most unkind treatment.' The evidence bears this out, despite posed photos in the Himmler family albums showing himself and the lad in Bavarian *Lederhosen* – in one, Heini is gingerly patting the boy's head.

Unwanted by his widowed mother and ignored by Himmler, Gerhard von der Ahé was a problem child for many years. While Gudrun was mollycoddled, and sent adoring letters to her distant dad, the boy penned letters in copperplate writing from boarding school, pleading to come home. He was often suspended and scattered entries in Marga's diary betray his increasing delinquency until he bravely joined the Waffen-SS at Brünn in 1945. He survived the war.

AT FIRST THE National Socialists had real power only in Prussia. Here Hermann Göring was prime minister. Himmler's name does not figure in Göring's 1933 pocket diary. Fate however played into their hands – and, as Hitler so often preached, the 'Goddess of Fortune passes only once.' On February 27, 1933 a Dutch Communist wastrel set fire to the Reichstag building. Hitler was visiting Dr Goebbels at the time. The phone rang with the news. It certainly took Hitler by surprise. Seeing it as a signal for a Red takeover, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to sign an Emergency Decree for the Protection of the People, and Democracy's coffin had its final nail.

Inevitably, rumours ran through Berlin that Göring, or Hitler's men, had really torched the building. Communists both then and later fanned these rumours into a blaze, and not a few historians willingly believed it. Count Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorff, a singularly nasty SA commander and later police chief in Berlin, told his son that he knew the culprits, but that he himself had nothing to do with it. Be that as it may, Hitler used the new Emergency Decree to neutralise the Social Democrats and Left elsewhere. Around 1,500 Communists were arrested. In Prussia at least, Hitler could now do as he wanted.

That left Bavaria. Himmler had returned to Munich to stage-manage

events there. 'We were tied to Munich at that time,' he reminisced ten years later, introducing Heydrich's successor. 'In Munich our turn did not come until March 12 and I became Police President of Munich and took over the Police Headquarters. Heydrich took over the Political Police.' That was just in time. His Intelligence service, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, had no money left. Paul Leffler, head of the SD field office in Berlin, refrained from drawing any salary for the first two weeks of March 1933.

A NEW ELECTION was held on March 5, 1933. With the Left now eliminated, Bavaria would be a pushover. Ordinary Bavarians now backed the Party whether in or out of Party uniform (and did so increasingly as the years passed). The swing to Hitler's Party was dramatic: the BVP, the ruling Party, attracted 24·2 percent of the vote, while Hitler's NSDAP soared to 43·1 percent.

It was still not an absolute majority, and the BVP prime minister Heinrich Held still clung to office. Hitler's men invaded city halls throughout Bavaria and hoisted the swastika banner. Hitler invited Ernst Röhm and his local Gauleiter Adolf Wagner to Berlin to discuss taking over in Bavaria by force. The SA and SS staged noisy demonstrations in Munich's city centre on March 9. The prime minister wavered, and declined to order his police to open fire – a crucial error in the eyes of the more bloodthirsty modern historians. At midday Heinrich Himmler went with Röhm to confront Held. They issued an ultimatum to appoint a dictator, a *Generalstaatskommissar*, to take control and restore order. The man they suggested was Franz Xaver Ritter von Epp. He was a monarchist Bavarian general, a prominent Catholic, and Reichstag member.

Held resisted. He appealed to the army – the Reichswehr – for support, then offered a coalition government instead. That afternoon the Hitler delegation reappeared accompanied by General von Epp. Held refused their terms, but in Berlin the new Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, a Hitler man, had already appointed Epp as *Reichskommissar*, citing the Emergency Decree of February 28 as the legal basis. At six-thirty p.m. Röhm's SA men seized the Munich city hall. From the balcony, publisher Max Amann, another Hitler man,

proclaimed that Epp had taken power and that Himmler had been given command of the Bavarian police force.

Epp appointed Himmler a month later as chief of the Bavarian political police. Himmler's notepaper gave him this style: Political Police Commander of Bavaria (*Der Politische Polizeikommandeur Bayerns*) in Bavaria's ministry of the interior. These were state positions, not Party: there was no swastika. Himmler turned the political police department over to Heydrich.

TO BE CHIEF OF POLICE AT THIRTY-TWO was impressive, but Himmler wanted more. Bumping into Karl Wolff on the evening of March 9, 1933, Himmler made him his adjutant to General von Epp. When 'Wölfchen' then modestly asked after six weeks whether he might now revert to his business affairs, Himmler invited him to become his own adjutant. From June 15, Wolff took over that position, with the rank of *Hauptsturmführer*, or captain.

The Munich police headquarters was a fine villa which had once housed the British consulate-general. Heinrich Himmler had his hands full. To be *Polizeipräsident* was normally a task for a fifty- or sixty-year-old career civil servant with legal training, not a thirty-two year old greenhorn like Himmler, but his new subordinates at the police headquarters on Arcisstrasse were happy to flatter him as 'Herr *Präsident*.' Karl Wolff took over the ante-room, dealt with mail, and organised the visitors.

The police could focus on just one enemy, the Communists alone. Until recently, Himmler and Heydrich had themselves been targets. As Himmler cast around for good men, he disregarded their political colour. Many of the police officials he selected for promotion were decidedly to his Left, like Franz Josef Huber, a *Kriminal-Oberinspekteur*, and the criminologist *Kriminalrat* Friedrich Panzinger. Huber was an 'anti-Nazi'; he had directed police operations against the right wing. Until Hitler's 'seizure of power' Huber had jeered that Hitler was a 'vagrant unemployed house-painter' and 'Austrian deserter,' and he denounced colleagues for using the greeting, 'Heil Hitler.' 'Together with his benefactor,' an angry note on Huber's personnel file said, 'namely *Kriminal-Ober-*

inspektor Heinrich Müller, who has recently been put forward for promotion, he was of the belief that they should use force to oppose the SA and SS occupation of Police Headquarters on March 9, 1933.' Huber was a good criminologist, however, and that counted more in Himmler's eyes; besides, they did not have enough trained National Socialists to step into these men's shoes.

As for Friedrich Panzinger, he had attended police academy with Heinrich Müller and would become deputy chief of *Amt* IV in 1938. Himmler thought highly of him. He vanished momentarily in May 1945. Finally arrested on October 3, 1946 in Linz, Panzinger was turned over to the Russians. The Russians found that they could use his skills, granted him immunity from prosecution, and sent him back to Germany in 1956 with instructions to penetrate the fledgling German Intelligence Service. The Americans ran him as a double-agent under the code-name UJNUTLET until his unfortunate end in 1959: A half-witted German policeman in Munich recognised him and arrested him; in Hollywood-style, Panzinger swallowed poison.

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO Heinrich Müller. In 1933 Himmler found Müller manning the Communism desk at Munich police headquarters together with Reinhard Flesch. These two men helped Himmler and Heydrich to mop up the Reds in Bavaria, and when Himmler finally transferred to Berlin he would take Müller with him, to run the new secret state police, the *Geheime Staatspolizei*. The German Post Office soon abbreviated that to Gestapo, which was catchier.

A slightly-built, intense-looking Bavarian, Heinrich Müller had become viscerally anti-Communist during the brief Soviet regime in Bavaria, and probably anti-Jewish after they butchered their hostages. He was no National Socialist, and it would take four years for the Party to allow him to join; it was Heydrich who pushed that through. He was a few months older than Himmler, born like him in Munich. Few photographs exist of him, and his actual end is shrouded in mystery. There was a hint of suppressed humour playing around his thin lips. His forehead suggested intelligence, above gimlet eyes set a millimetre or two closer than was comfortable. To distinguish him

from other Müllers, in secret-police circles they nicknamed him 'tiny Müller,' *der kleine*, but History knows him better as 'Gestapo' Müller.

Objective and merciless, Müller rose to the highest positions, slotting in at No. 4 just below Hitler – Himmler – Heydrich in the SS hierarchy. 'He not only toed the line to the Heydrich brand of Machiavellianism,' said one close colleague, 'but began to preach it himself.' When Odilo Globocnik insisted in 1942 on having a paper authorising his OPERATION REINHARDT – to kill a quarter million Jews – it was Müller who humoured him. 'A terrible fellow,' assessed one diplomat. 'Unassuming, worked like slow poison; he spoke quietly and slowly, watching all the time, you had the feeling that nothing can upset him, but he hears and sees everything.' He was the immediate superior of No. 5 in that hierarchy, Adolf Eichmann.

Himmler leaned totally on Müller, this faceless creature; but he never really liked him, and was never as close to him as to Heydrich. If Müller had a weakness it was his aversion to Germany's officer-class, and this was nearly the Gestapo's undoing in July 1944.

Müller had married a Sophie Dischner, but started an affair with 'Babette,' his secretary Barbara Hellmuth. In about 1940 Müller transferred his affections to a younger girl, Anna Schmid. She was thirteen years his junior. She was often questioned later; but what can a mistress ever really know? She described him as a family man, modest, and a nature-lover. Once in about 1942, said Anna, she had asked him when he would make an honest woman of her. Müller replied evasively as men do – let's see how the war goes first, and then they could discuss. 'Müller did not have a good relationship with Himmler,' she knew, 'but his relations with Heydrich had been excellent.' In the 1960s police found and copied eleven photos of Müller, still in her possession. Being a Bavarian, he often wrote her in shorthand, 'outright love letters' rather in the style of Mills & Boon, or the German literary equivalent, Hedwig Courths-Mahler. He called her 'my darlingest most beloved little mousekin'.

Poor Anna was besotted with Müller, and her mother scolded her for having 'thrown away' her life like this. He told her that the Yellow Star idea, of which we shall hear, was his. 'I was not aware that the Jews were being exterminated,' she testified, 'but I did have the

impression that Müller was very tight-lipped about their treatment.'

WHEN AND WHERE Heinrich Müller died are mysteries. His father told Anna in 1958 that Heinrich was buried at the garrison cemetery at Lilienstrasse in Berlin-Neukölln. She found a tin marker inscribed 'Heinrich Müller' on lot 6–1–1. His two adult children paid for a brown marble gravestone, and she erected it there: 'Our dear daddy,' reads the inscription, 'Heinrich Müller, born Apr 28, 1900, killed Berlin May 1945' (*Unser lieber Vati, Heinrich Müller, geb.* 28.4.1900, *gefallen in Berlin Mai* 1945); but the rumours persisted that Müller had got away. The Americans called in a forensic expert, Professor Gerhard Rommeney; he determined in September 1963 that the grave contained three people; none of them was Müller.

Müller's old Gestapo headquarters at No. 8, Prinz-Albrechtstrasse had been bombed out. Müller moved to the Tiergarten district, into No. 116, Kurfürstenstrasse; he lived at No. 22, Cornelius-Strasse. It was here that Anna Schmid called on him on the evening of April 20, 1945, Hitler's last birthday; his radio specialist SS *Sturmbannführer* Christian Scholz, who would play a part in the Blomberg wedding scandal and as Müller's principal assistant in 'playback' operations, was there. Müller had just come from a conference in Wannsee. He told Anna that the situation was hopeless. He offered her a fake ID, but she declined it.

Four days later, on April 24, 1945, she biked over to his office to plead with him to fly out of Berlin. As she described it, their farewell meeting, was dramatic and moving. He had little time, he told Anna now, as he had to go over to the Chancellery. Müller was standing in for Himmler, his absent boss, at Hitler's final conferences in the bunker. 'I found him,' she recalled, 'arrayed in full uniform with the Knight's Cross around his neck' – Müller had been awarded the medal for his work on the July 20 Bomb Plot. He scolded her for having come, and handed her an ampoule of poison. Softening, he added that he had seen a lot of the world, and he had come to know one wonderful person, namely Anna. Then *Gruppenführer* Müller made an odd admission. 'Yes,' he blurted out. 'The best men are winning!' *Ja, die Besseren siegen*. Anna reproved him. The Russians –

better? 'Precisely,' he confirmed. 'They are best. *Doch, die sind die Besseren*.'

Ten days into May 1945, this young woman returned there. The Kurfürstenstrasse building was empty, and his office pockmarked with bullets. A sheet of paper covered something on the ground; it might have been a corpse; but it was not. The same little painting still graced one wall, but there was no trace of the attaché case he always used to carry with him. Two or three days later she tried to visit the bomb-damaged main building in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, but it was unsafe to enter and she gave up her search for Müller's body.

OTHER SOURCES THROW A FLICKERING LIGHT on the days. On the evening of May 1, 1945, the day after Hitler's death, Müller was still alive and in Berlin. He was seen bestowing Iron Crosses in the Führer bunker. 'During the ceremony,' testified one recipient, Horst Kittler, 'Müller announced that a break-out attempt was planned for that evening. He would not be participating. He seemed depressed.' At around seven p.m. Müller told Hitler's pilot Hans Baur, like him an aviator in the First World War, that he had no intention of being captured alive: 'We know the Russian methods exactly.'

The break-out began around nine p.m., by several hundred men and women including Baur and the drivers. Kittler saw Müller and Scholz – '*der lange Scholz,*' they called him – waving goodbye from an office doorway. A witness saw Müller standing in the same doorway, holding a pistol in his right hand. Another heard Hans Rattenhuber, chief of Hitler's personal security detail, shouting to Müller that this was his last chance. 'No, Hans,' Müller shouted back. 'The government has fallen and thus I fall also.' The army generals Hans Krebs and Wilhelm Burgdorf stayed behind in the bunker, and shot themselves. Their bodies were found, but not Müller's. Speculation as to his fate remained. As U.S. Intelligence put it in October 1971, there were a lot of witnesses to Müller being alive in the bunker that evening, but none who had seen either him or Scholz *dead*.

Both had evidently had 'some special reason' for remaining behind.

Perhaps Heinrich Müller had his personal medals and papers placed on another body before making a long-prepared escape with one of

those fake IDs. On May 4, 1946 the registrar's office of Berlin-Mitte turned over some of his medals to an agency which passed them on to the German Armed Forces Notification Office for next-of-kin, the *Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle* (WASt); they forwarded them to his widow in Munich. Müller's father showed them to Anna. They did not prove anything, one way or the other.

'Our relationship was such,' she concluded sadly, 'that I am sure I would have heard from him.'

She admitted however that she would never have betrayed him.

21: *A Policeman's Lot*

HEYDRICH AND THE SD HEADQUARTERS remained in Berlin for barely a month after the National Socialist 'seizure of power' in 1933. Then they were ordered back to Munich. Heydrich moved back to Zuccali Strasse. When 1933 ended Himmler too was still in Munich. Neither Hitler nor Göring felt comfortable with Himmler in Berlin. Only the local SS and SD agencies were able to establish themselves in the capital. SS *Hauptsturmführer* Hans Kobelinski, who had founded the SD in Berlin, ran the show with SS *Hauptsturmführer* Paul Leffler.

The *Sicherheitsdienst* headquarters occupied two floors of No. 10, Leopold Strasse. It soon employed two hundred people, and now they were on the government payroll. Lina Heydrich was expecting their first child. (Reinhard Heydrich's son Heider told us that he possesses letters to Lina covering this Bavarian police period.)

In April 1933 Göring set up the *Geheime Staatspolizei*, or secret state police, in Prussia. He housed it in a former art school at No. 8 Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. The Prinz Albrecht Hotel next door would become the SS headquarters and the SD would take over the Prinz Albrecht Palace in Wilhelm Strasse. The first chief of this Gestapo was Rudolf Diels, a scar-faced career civil servant somewhat younger than Himmler. 'He had an inferior character,' Wolff told his interrogators, 'intelligent but low-grade to say the least.' Diels offered to a senior British diplomat the excuse that 'the office of chief hangman is bound

to be distasteful at all times.' In the fight against subversion, he added disarmingly, 'information can only be obtained by drastic measures,' which he spelt out frankly as 'bodily ill-treatment,' torture. Diels bears the blame for everything that went on in the Prussian Gestapo until Himmler took over.' 'You know what I mean,' Diels continued. 'In nine cases out of ten the end justifies the means, but in the tenth case there is some mistake, the man is found to be innocent – and I am held responsible.'

That was the problem: nowadays one just couldn't get the right staff.

It only later dawned on Diels, he protested engagingly to the British diplomat, that his Gestapo had been recruiting sadists. In Stettin, for example, they had arrested half a dozen suspects including two women. Unfortunately all turned out to be innocent and word about the 'flogging' of the girls came to Göring's ears in the spring of 1934. This was when Diels decided to quit. He managed to slither into the less noxious provincial post of *Regierungspräsident* in Cologne.

PRUSSIA WAS AT FIRST AN EXCEPTION TO Himmler's police empire. In every other province political police forces sprang up like mushrooms in warm rain, as he himself put it. 'I was something of a legal rarity,' he boasted. 'I was a citizen of Bavaria, of Baden, of Württemberg – you name it. I was at home here, there, and everywhere.' With Hitler's blessing, he took over the political police departments of Hamburg, Lübeck, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin in November 1933; then of Württemberg, Baden, Anhalt, Hesse, Thuringia, and Bremen in December, and of Brunswick, Oldenburg, and Saxony in January.

'Very soon after 1933,' his older brother Gebhard would write, 'he described it to me as his greatest sorrow to have to deal with the negative side of humanity.' Gebhard wrote those words in 1946, and a quarter-century later he repeated them word for word to us – that Heini had called the policeman's lot an unhappy one, as he was dealing constantly with low-lifes, the underbelly of mankind.

HEYDRICH WAS THE EXECUTOR OF HIMMLER'S police instructions. He ordered his staff to resume their work on the card-index. Heydrich was master, and making his own decisions on how things were done.

Documents in Moscow archives provide an overview of this work as the index was rigorously updated. Each card was cross-referenced to the subject's friends, organisations, references in the press, and connections to localities and specific bodies like the freemasons or Judea (*Judentum*). There were lists of Catholics, homosexuals, liberals, and monarchists. Interestingly, the instructions made no provision for surveillance of other arms of the NSDAP, or even of Ernst Röhm's Brownshirts. As for the Jews, they rated no higher than a sub-division labelled *Referat* IV/2. The SD directives to field agents were extensive – they were to watch how each Jewish organisation was operating, and its machinations: were Jews selling their businesses to straw men, for example, or squirrelling away their assets overseas?

The SD also devoted disproportionate attention to freemasons: they were the target of *Abteilung* V. Heydrich was still basing his card-index structure on the availability of corresponding experts, rather than on any particular requirements stated to him by Himmler.

THE MUNICH LAWYER WHO BECAME Heydrich's right hand man was Dr Werner Best, a skilled criminologist. He had fallen foul of his local Gauleiter, and Himmler liked that. Best, barely thirty, would oversee the gradual unification of Germany's police forces. In mid-1933 Himmler started him off as head of the south-western SD, based in Stuttgart, and in March 1934 he moved Best to Munich and gave him the job of building the SD there. It was not a large unit – at most a dozen young men. It was housed at No. 10, Leopold Strasse alongside Heydrich's central SD headquarters.

Hitler and Himmler both had low opinions of experts. They themselves had slipped *sideways* into state positions, without rising through the ranks – without really learning the ropes. Heydrich intended to fill important posts with law professionals, while Himmler wanted mere *Kriminalkommissare*; many were good at their job but lacked a proper background in the law. Heydrich insisted on checking each candidate's 'racial appearance;' Nordic types were put on the fast track. Heydrich wanted eager men of soldierly and athletic bearing, said Dr Best, but also men who were slightly extrovert.

Himmler was different. He would gradually fill the ranks of

the *Ordnungspolizei*, the regular police, with SS officers. Dr Best preserved the civil-service, lawyerly, element. The images of torture in dungeons which would amuse movie-theatre audiences and prosper the memoirs of more than one Gestapo victim are in fact far from historical reality. What are now called 'enhanced interrogation techniques' might produce results, but seldom the unadulterated truth that is required. The force Best built would have gone down in history as one of the finest ever, had not the Party – and others – begun to use it for murderous political tasks as time went on.

ALL THAT WOULD COME ONLY later. Himmler still had no blood on his hands, so far as we know, but in March 1933 he had begun to sweep up Hitler's enemies in Bavaria and he set up his first 'concentration camp' in Dachau – the suburban Munich town where Ferdinand Mirwald lived, the artist who had led Gebhard's fiancée Paula Stölzle astray. Such camps were not new. They had been established by the British in the Boer War, and when Britain needed secure camps for aliens and dissidents in 1940, the chief of the British security service privately used the term 'concentration camp' in his diary; when President Franklin D Roosevelt and J Edgar Hoover in the spring of 1941 ordered camps built to intern their Japanese-born subjects, the blueprints freely referred to them as 'concentration camps.'

Himmler based his Dachau camp on an old munitions factory with derelict stone buildings on the River Amper, twelve miles north-west of Munich. Prisoners were to be held in 'administrative custody' (*Schutzhaft*), without legal procedure – the prisoners were simply detained under Article One of the 1933 Emergency Regulations: 'Suspicion of acting against the interests of the State.' In June 1933 he appointed the SS veteran Theodor Eicke, eight years his senior, to run Dachau. Eicke, newly released from a mental institution, would train more commandants as Himmler's camp empire expanded.

While the earlier 'illegal' camps erected by Röhm's men were mostly primitive and unhygienic, those erected by Eicke at the dictate of Himmler, this schoolmaster's son, were to become literally model correctional institutions. Dachau would provide a template. Each of the huts housed 270 prisoners, in bunks of three tiers. Each

of the huts at Dachau had twelve toilets (which is rather more than on a modern airliner). Chequered bedspreads had to be exactly aligned with the frames, and so on. Eicke put his guards through military training and formed military units known as the Death's Head units.

The first lesson that greeted arriving inmates was wrought in iron above the entrance gate: *Arbeit macht frei* – Work Sets Free, a promise that was only rarely honoured. Other legends were painted along walls and rooftops. Inmates could ponder on the slogan: 'There is one route to freedom. Its milestones are: obedience, zeal, honesty, order, cleanliness, temperance, truth, sense of sacrifice, and love for the Fatherland.' The author of that seems beyond question: Himmler.

DACHAU BECAME SOMETHING OF A showpiece. Over the next twelve years Himmler expanded the site, and added features in line with his own interests – like an angora rabbit farm, and an allotment to grow new herbal medicines. Visitors heard ugly rumours, spread by enemies, but emerged satisfied. Luftwaffe general Erhard Milch and air ace Ernst Udet came away impressed. After Baron Friedrich Karl von Eberstein became the local police chief of Munich, he conducted VIPs around Dachau, among them the Yugoslav minister of the interior, a senior American police officer, and Italian personalities.

A photo album depicts Himmler showing visitors over the camp in May 1936. Walter Wüst, president of the *Ahnenerbe* foundation, was their guide – here were the Jehovah's Witnesses, over here the repeat offenders, and there the political offenders. 'Speak with anybody you want. You can go into the barracks and ask what you want.' Gauleiter Hinrich Lohse told British interrogators that after visiting the camp with Rudolf Hess at around the same time, he was rather impressed by 'the general efficiency.' General Hermann Reinecke persuaded Himmler to give him and 160 army officers a guided tour. 'The officers were allowed to go anywhere and were satisfied that the inmates were well treated,' stated Reinecke, and he would offset this against 1945 newspaper reports of atrocities.

Among the foreign visitors were Members of the British Parliament, and the International Red Cross.

While criticising the unfamiliar principle of administrative

custody (*Schutzhaft*), the I.R.C. delegates declared themselves impressed – Dachau was 'orderly, with a certain elegance . . . a model of its type regarding installation, facilities, administration. The regulations imposed are strict but not inhumane. The sick, in particular, are treated with kindness, comprehension, and medical competence.' The prisoners were housed better than their guards. They could buy chocolate, candies, cakes, fruit, sausage, coffee, and cigarettes, the Red Cross inspectors found. 'We did not notice fatigue or signs of bad treatment . . . as is frequently reported by the press.' There was a sports field and a library. Even the punishment cells were clean; they had a mattress, toilet, and wash basin. Any guard who hit a prisoner would be punished – so these inspectors were told.

In 1939 two top British MI6 agents would be captured in The Venlo Incident, and in 1940 one wrote to the other: 'My sentries are all good blokes. Head Warder particularly considerate. Comes frequently and spends an hour with me, gives me a fag and cheers me up. Must express gratitude for treatment here. They all make things as easy as their orders allow. I shall not forget.' The SD had good reason to manipulate their MI6 prizes. Later, the second agent rebuked the first for selling horror stories: 'Untrue stories of ill-treatment suffered as a prisoner in Germany are to my mind . . . nothing less than criminal, and I shall always do everything in my power to unmask them.'

It is fair to report these early views. As conditions deteriorated, however, so did those in the camps, and disproportionately.

FRIENDS OF PRISONERS and even close relatives of Himmler approached him to get men released from Dachau. One was now a doctor, Karl Gebhardt, Himmler's schoolfriend from Landshut. He had joined a Freikorps and participated in Hitler's 1923 putsch, taking the casualties to the famous Professor Ferdinand Sauerbruch, at the University Clinic; he had since then worked under Sauerbruch at Hohenaschau and learned reconstructive surgery. Paunchier than Himmler remembered him, in 1933 Gebhardt came to plead for the early release of Franz Roh, who had been tossed into Dachau for unhelpful remarks about Dr Goebbels' campaign against Junk Art.

Himmler suggested that Gebhardt join the SS but the SS turned

him down. Instead he became a surgeon specialising in sports injuries. An army general would sneer about Himmler's 'bosom pal' Dr Gebhardt at the end of the war, calling him a specialist for little girls who massaged 'special customers.' 'He is also a specialist in abortion,' the German general said. 'For that alone he deserves to be killed. He should be number one on the list of war criminals.' The Americans obliged, and took Karl Gebhardt to the gallows in 1947.

BEING EFFECTIVELY BANISHED from Berlin for most of 1933, Himmler failed to secure control of Göring's *Forschungsamt*, or 'Research Agency.' This was a secret wire-tap unit set up by the Weimar regime. In its heyday the FA employed six thousand experts. From buildings in Berlin-Charlottenburg and seventy municipal sub-stations, the FA's civil servants tapped the phone lines of diplomats, journalists, and visiting foreign delegations. As it was financed now by Prussia, the 'FA' came under Göring. During international trade conferences FA 'flying squads' moved into key Berlin hotels like the Bristol in Kurfürstendamm to monitor room-to-room conversations – which enabled Göring to conduct insider trading on a colossal scale.

The FA's products, 'Brown Pages,' were hectographed on brown paper. The transcripts were circulated by pneumatic post around Berlin to recipients on a strict must-be-returned basis: their secrecy was enforced by the death-penalty. Baron von Neurath, the foreign minister, warned the British ambassador in December 1933 that they had been listening to a *Daily Telegraph* journalist's telephone conversations, 'which showed him to be most unfairly prejudiced against the German government.' He suggested prudence.

The *Forschungsamt* indexed and cross-referenced each proper name: by 1944 the FA index held three million names. Over its twelve-year existence, the FA issued half a million 'Brown Pages,' including digests of secret sources – for example a 1939 summary, 'On British foreign policy from the Munich Agreement to the Outbreak of War.' The FA's Department IV also worked on cryptanalysis, aided by Hollerith punched-card computing machines. They would solve every one of the U.S. State Department and O.S.S. strip cyphers.

Like every other supplicant, Himmler had to lodge requests for

FA wiretaps. Every wiretap field office (FA-*Stelle*) had direct access to local police headquarters, to the Residents' Registration Office (*Einwohnermeldeamt*) and to the guest lists which German hotels nightly provided to the police. Himmler was content to let people believe that the Gestapo did the wiretapping. In December 1933 Rudolf Hess's wife wrote him about what she took to be a clumsy wiretap placed on her home phone. 'Alright, my highly esteemed friend,' she concluded, with mock reverence amidst a forest of exclamation marks. 'That's got that off my chest to you!' Himmler sent a languid reply, four months later. 'It's not us, the Political Police,' he assured her. Be that as it may, when the Duke and Duchess of Windsor stayed with Hess in 1937, their phone line too was certainly tapped; and sniggering transcripts of the indelicate pillow talk of the free-living daughter of American ambassador Thomas Dodd were circulated as 'matters of state.'

Himmler failed to bring the FA under his control. In a report issued in 1945, the enemy would assess that this was a 'serious gap in his Intelligence network.' Of those, it must be said, there were not many.

22: *A Louse beneath the Fur*

ON JULY 14, 1933, HITLER'S GOVERNMENT consolidated its power with a law admirable for its brevity rather than its intent. 'There is only one political Party in Germany,' read its first paragraph, 'namely the National Socialist German Workers' Party.' The second paragraph specified the penalties for those who violated the first.

That same month SA's chief of staff Ernst Röhm moved its headquarters out of the Brown House to a villa in Munich's Prinzregentenplatz; in January 1934 he moved once more to Barerstrasse. This separation from the Party documented a growing dissatisfaction with Hitler. In private, Röhm began calling him the 'carpet-eater,' and criticising his manners. But the boot was on the other foot. Hitler needed the support of the regular army, and Himmler backed him unequivocally. On September 2, 1933 he penned this message to the Hitler Youth: 'Every German youth is a soldier for Adolf Hitler.'

Borrowing from the Catholic church, as the perceptive journalist William Shirer observed, Hitler was restoring pageantry and mysticism to the drab lives of the German people. In 1933 the Party staged its first Nuremberg rally for four years, under the slogan *Victory of Faith*. Equipped now with all the resources of the government, it could afford to stage a lavish spectacle. Movie star and now film director Leni Riefenstahl made a film record of the event – of the

thumping bands, the fiery speeches, the glistening eyes, the inspired young men and women, the pomp and swagger of the regiments of SS. The climax was the parade, with notables massed on the bleachers and Hess and diplomats crowding round Hitler's Mercedes. The film records thunderous applause as Heinrich Himmler's elite SS squad stomped into view, breaking into the Prussian parade-march like a high-kicking chorus line – the *Sieg-Heil Follies*, one might say. But these were grown men, fit and purposeful, and their aspect was somehow on the sinister side of ludicrous. Himmler himself marched in front, pudding-basin'd in a shiny helmet, his men immaculate in Hugo Boss and white gloves, as though tramping into an end-of-term prom. Even Himmler performed the strenuous *Paradeschritt* faultlessly for the last few hundred yards.

Keeping impeccable time as he drew level with the long black limousine in which Hitler stood to take the salute, he right-about turned and presented his sword. He had always liked uniforms. He was furious at the hapless publisher of the pictorial history *Nürnberg* 1933 upon finding it contained few pictures of his SS, 'precisely the troops which have thrown themselves into the rebirth of the Third Reich with such devotion and dedication.'

There was however one flaw: the newsreel cameras dwelt on Hitler greeting Ernst Röhm – for whom the bell would shortly toll. In consequence he ordered the Riefenstahl documentary *Victory of Faith* destroyed without a showing. She died at a great age without knowing that one original had survived, of which we issued many duplicates.

SINCE RÖHM'S RETURN FROM BOLIVIA IN 1931 to take over the Brownshirts, Himmler had maintained arm's length relations. Röhm was still his superior. On October 15, 1931 Himmler had sent him an in-house memo couched in the obligatory stilted language, reading: 'I humbly request that SS *Oberführer* Dietrich be promoted to SS *Gruppenführer*' – roughly, lieutenant-general. Sepp Dietrich, he suggested, possessed the qualities for such high rank, and now commanded the important SS *Gruppe Ost* in place of Kurt Daluege.

Daluege would become chief of the regular police in Prussia,

the *Ordnungspolizei*. Himmler had evidently not consulted Röhm about either appointment. Putting a good face on it, Röhm sent him a restrained letter on October 16 declaring himself 'in subsequent agreement.' Himmler awarded the Death's Head ring to Daluege, with its accompanying certificate swearing loyalty to the Führer: 'The Death's Head is an admonition to us to be ready at all times to forfeit the life of our *ego* for that of our community,' recorded the document, along with much more solemn verbiage – for example the significance of runes and swastika: 'Shouldst thou ever leave the SS or life itself, this ring shall revert to the Reichsführer SS,' and: 'Wear this ring with honour!'

As for Daluege, we shall encounter this sick, and eventually mentally unbalanced, individual often during the coming war; after which, a Czech court in Prague will order his life terminated with the customary official strangulation.

IT WAS AN ERA of private armies. Göring had the makings of an air force. Himmler had given Sepp Dietrich command of a *Wachbataillon*, or guards battalion. But neither was a match for the SA, the *Sturmabteilung*, Ernst Röhm's bloated Brownshirt army of cut-throats, which now numbered close to two million men. Himmler's elite SS looked down their noses at them – SA men were largely rebellious and dissatisfied, hard-working hooligans, but hooligans none the less. In Breslau their favourite hotel was the Monopol, where their commander and his men drank away their evenings – smashing wine glasses into walls, shooting at chandeliers, and slashing paintings and upholstery with their daggers.

Hitler had promised President Hindenburg that the regular army, the Reichswehr, would be the only bearer of arms. The Reichswehr still feared that Röhm intended to supplant them. It was an unseen trial of strength. Röhm fought to extend his influence, and appointed SA-commissioners at every level of government. Many were known homosexuals; but they were outside the law by virtue of their SA rank. Hitler and Röhm kept up appearances, but troubles were brewing beneath the surface. Hitler lectured the SA on July 1, 1933 and then the gauleiters five days later, using coded language: the revolution

was complete, he said, and they were to channel their energies into 'the secure bed' of evolution. This play on words did not appease the rowdies in the SA.

Himmler navigated cautiously between these dangerous shoals. In October 1933 Himmler and Röhm both acted as Godfathers at the christening of Klaus, the first son of Reinhard Heydrich.

MEANWHILE HE TENDED THE PURITANICAL image of the SS. 'Over recent months,' read one of his orders, 'I have had cause to hand down severe punishments in the SS officer corps, including reduction to the ranks and the expulsion of two *Oberführer* for embezzlement . . . and the same punishment for a *Sturmführer*, six NCOs, and seven SS men for brutally causing grievous bodily harm to prisoners and gross dereliction of their duty. I considered the death penalty appropriate against three of the latter, but could not apply it for legal reasons.'

One of the cases concerned two SS men involved in the murder of Albrecht Höhler. In 1930 'Ali' Höhler, a Communist activist, had murdered Horst Wessel, a young veteran of the struggle for Berlin: Höhler had taken a posse to Wessel's digs and shot him as he opened the door. Höhler was jailed for manslaughter. On September 20, 1933, he was transferred to a different prison: SA commander Karl Ernst and a gang of thugs ambushed the prison transport, passed 'sentence' on the killer, and put him to death violently nearby.

Röhm argued that Hitler had betrayed the 'socialist' part of his programme, and was subservient to Hindenburg and the regular army. In Berlin, Karl Ernst had a hundred thousand Brownshirts chomping at the bit. Their illegal camps held forty thousand prisoners; forty-eight prisoners met their deaths, according to Rudolf Diels, including eight Jews, 'shot trying to escape.' Still, as the year 1933 ended, Hitler sent New Year's greetings to seven colleagues, and his message to Röhm was seen to be the most cordial of all. It used the *Du* mode of address (Röhm was one of only two such bosom friends; the other was Ernst Schmidt, a comrade from the Great War).

The evidence that Röhm was up to something stacked up. He had chosen Theo Croneiss, a director of the Messerschmitt aircraft works, to replace Hermann Göring as air minister, for example, and

had given him a magnificent ceremonial dagger. Croneiss ratted Röhm out to Göring. Röhm denied it. Told all this, Hitler solemnly placed both hands on Göring's shoulders and said: 'Göring, you are not mistaken.' Himmler rewarded Croneiss with high SS rank later; Crioneiss died in 1942.

EARLY IN 1934, Diels provided a complete dossier on Röhm's treachery. He submitted new evidence on the Obersalzberg on January 12. It named Röhm's cronies as Gregor Strasser and General Kurt von Schleicher. Whenever Röhm was in Berlin he was seen to visit Gregor Strasser. Hitler spoke sharply of the others, whom he termed *oppositionelle Führungspersonen*, or 'ringleaders of the opposition,' who were 'betraying the National Socialist revolution.' Turning to Göring, Hitler said (according to Diels), that he wanted them *beseitigt*. 'I will have these Sons of Chaos rooted out,' he rasped. 'They shall not be permitted to prey on our nerves any longer.'

'As usual,' said Diels later, 'Hitler expressed himself ambiguously.' He heard Hitler muse that Strasser 'might for instance commit suicide.' Hitler spoke of making him 'Police Minister' – the last thing he wanted, said Hitler, was Himmler getting his hands on the police. 'Bad enough with Röhm,' he said, according to Diels: 'I've already got one louse in my fur.' Diels righteously told Göring that none of his officials was about to bump off anybody, and decided to report sick. 'Well, I guess then you *are* sick,' snarled Göring. He warned that Himmler was less squeamish. Göring wondered how far he could trust Himmler: 'You know him,' he inquired of Richard Walther Darré, minister of agriculture. 'What d'you make of him?'

'All I know,' replied Darré, 'is that when we get together he just talks about his magnificent "guardsmen," and about our peasant stock. I can't see anything wrong with him.'

ON FEBRUARY 1, 1934 HITLER APPOINTED a commander-in-chief for the army, General Werner von Fritsch. Fritsch was a nationalist and an old-school general, with a monocle which he swapped from eye to eye. He shared with Hitler a dislike of the 'Jewish press,' and a belief that 'the pacifists, Jews, democrats, and the French are one and

the same – namely people bent on Germany's perdition.' He would write four years later that he had realised soon after the Great War that Germany faced three great battles – against organised labour, against the Catholic Church, and against the Jews: 'We are still in the thick of this battle, and the battle against the Jews is the toughest.'

ON THE SAME DAY THAT FRITSCH WAS appointed, Röhm sent to Hitler a memorandum demanding nothing less than that the Reichswehr, the army, be replaced by a militia, with its officers drawn from his SA, and himself as its commander-in-chief. Hitler needed a professional officer corps, however, not a Browndshirt rabble. Fritsch remarked to General Werner von Blomberg, the war minister, on February 3, 'An army is founded on discipline, and not on any "revolutionary spirit".'

Blomberg's ministry drew up plans designed to emasculate the SA, issued on February 27: Röhm and his SA should be restricted to paramilitary training. Hitler broke the news the next day. Röhm and Blomberg unwillingly shook hands; but Röhm issued secret orders that same day at his Berlin headquarters in Standartenstrasse, diametrically contradicting Hitler's, and ridiculed him as 'that ignorant Great War corporal.'

All this fascinated the British ambassador Sir Eric Phipps. On March 20 he attended a reunion of the Party's Old Guard in Munich, and both Himmler and Röhm spoke. 'Herr Himmler,' reported Phipps, 'declared that a new Germany founded on the National Socialist virtues of loyalty, obedience, and comradeship would endure throughout the ages. The wishes of the Old Guard were simple,' he said. 'To remain decent simple soldiers as long as they lived; to fight and keep discipline, if Adolf Hitler so ordered; and to charge furiously, if ever they were allowed to let themselves go again.'

Röhm spoke on a more populist level. He said that he preferred it 'when revolutions were being *made* rather than celebrated.' This sly hint brought the house down; which seemed ominous.

From that month onward, Röhm's demands for the amalgamation of the 100,000-man Reichswehr with the SA into one People's Army, in outright violation of the Versailles Treaty, grew more insistent. The tipping point was the banquet he staged in Berlin that April. Almost

every foreign diplomat was there. The British were visibly cordial toward him. The former chancellor General Kurt von Schleicher offered his services to Röhm's Political Office.

A SHOWDOWN SEEMED INEVITABLE. A YEAR-LONG process had brought almost all Germany's police forces under Himmler's control, except for Prussia and the tiny province of Schaumburg-Lippe. By offering Göring the unconditional support of his SS men, Himmler persuaded him to ditch Rudolf Diels and give him the Prussian police.

Himmler had given 'Pili' Körner, Göring's state-secretary, an honorary rank in his SS, and it was Körner who brokered the deal. A photographer was summoned, and captured the image of Himmler and Göring shaking hands beneath a large swastika flag. Himmler promised that he would never lift his hand against Göring. 'On April 20, 1934,' recalled Himmler later, 'and after a lengthy discussion like the old Party veterans we were, the then Prussian prime minister Göring appointed me his deputy chief of the Gestapo, and Heydrich became its Inspector.'

Those 'deputy' titles were mere casuistry, designed to preserve Göring's vanity. Formally, Himmler would come under Göring on the letterheads; but he would be the real chief of the Gestapo and the Prussian police, with Heydrich as his right-hand man. Indeed, Reinhard Heydrich is to be recognized as the evil genius behind most of Himmler's actions over the next eight years.

This sinister game of leapfrogs did not escape notice in official Berlin. 'Another wrangle has taken place over the appointment of Herr Himmler as head of the Prussian political police despite the strong opposition of General Göring,' reported the British ambassador on April 25, 1934. 'Herr Himmler has taken over the political police in almost all the other states and his new appointment constitutes an encroachment on General Göring's preserve.'

He commented that 'relations between *Stabschef* Röhm and General von Reichenau are notoriously bad.' (The wealthy and politically active major-general Walther von Reichenau was Blomberg's chief of staff at the war ministry.)

A CRIMINOLOGIST took over the Prussian *Landeskriminalamt*: this was Arthur Nebe, whose name is worth noting. Göring had appointed him as Diels' right-hand man in 1933. Nebe was an out-and-out National Socialist. Only a humble detective until now, he had advanced swiftly. He became close to Himmler, and even closer to Heinrich Müller, chief of the Bavarian political police. From April 1933, Nebe progressively converted all the political police forces in Germany into agencies of a unified Gestapo. Their agents were instructed to listen for sounds of Röhm's treachery.

In April 1934 Himmler diffidently tried to call his superior Röhm to order. He took Karl Wolff along with him. One encounter was in a castle near Magdeburg belonging to the heiress to the Busch brewery fortune. At their second encounter with Röhm, in the SA guest-house in Berlin, Himmler used language that was too cautious for Wolff's liking; Himmler remarked that selecting colleagues for their perverted sexual preferences would damage Germany. Röhm flushed pink; he thanked Himmler, then carried on as before. That evening, alleged Wolff later, there was the usual orgy at Röhm's Berlin headquarters, fuelled by quantities of French liquors. Himmler, Reichsführer SS, decided that his boss Röhm was 'beyond hope.'

Röhm began visiting his SA regions, initiating them in his plans. Himmler followed two weeks later, speaking to each corresponding SS regiment. He called for absolute obedience if a showdown came. General Wilhelm Keitel, at that time commanding an infantry division in Potsdam, got wind of Röhm's plans. There seemed little doubt that something was afoot.

On May 23, Röhm signed a secret order to start stockpiling arms 'to put muscle into the SA's dealings with the armed forces.' That language left little room for doubt. Blomberg showed the order to Hitler. Karl Ernst, the Berlin SA commander, badgered about the army's secret arms dumps and offered to take over guarding them. Keitel instructed his staff officer Major Enno von Rintelen to find out what Ernst was up to. Rintelen had served under the famed Colonel Walther Nicolai in army Intelligence. The major came back with word that it seemed Röhm was planning an 'operation' in Berlin at the end of June.

Keitel tipped off Blomberg and Reichenau at the ministry, but they were sceptical. After a second visit from Karl Ernst and his chief of staff Wilhelm Sander in the second half of June, Keitel sent for Rintelen and he came back with word that the balloon was about to go up. Röhm had put the loyal Reichswehr generals on a black list, said Keitel, while Schleicher and his chief assistant Major General Ferdinand von Bredow had made common cause with Röhm. Göring ordered his *Forschungsamt* to tap Schleicher's phone. This shortly revealed that Röhm intended to do a deal with France. Word of this treachery ran rapidly round the Party. Joachim von Ribbentrop, the foreign policy expert, remarked on it while visiting Paris; his aide tipped off Neurath's deputy foreign minister, Bernhard Wilhelm von Bülow, that Göring had his eye on Schleicher.

HIMMLER'S DIARY FOR 1934 IS UNFORTUNATELY missing, but we can see the wheels already beginning to turn. Himmler met with Göring and Hitler, and then with his own men Heydrich and Daluege, to plan their moves. Once, General Blomberg came over to meet Himmler with Reichenau. The war ministry crucially agreed to provide the SS with the weapons and ammunition it might need. Meanwhile Röhm tried to persuade Hitler that Gregor Strasser, the Party's outcast, was okay. Hitler liked the Berlin SA commander Karl Ernst even less, as was evident from an odd incident that June. Ernst's adjutant was a former fighter pilot in the World War, Daniel Gerth, a holder of the Pour le Mérite, the highest Great War honour of all. In a drunken brawl Gerth had insulted Lieutenant Schalke, an officer of Göring's secret air force. Schalke challenged him to a duel with pistols. When Röhm visited Berlin, General Milch mentioned the challenge to Hitler. Normally against duels, Hitler approved it in this case, telling Milch: 'Ernst has been asking for this!' Milch had to advise him that it was only the adjutant, not the SA *Gruppenführer* himself. The duel took place; Gerth had a flesh wound and survived – but not for long.

Hitler had a five-hour talk with Röhm that day, June 4. It ended with loud words. Röhm refused to drop his demands about the army. Hitler ordered him to send the entire SA on furlough, to cool off, for thirty days from July 1, and to start a vacation himself in three days'

time. Röhm obediently checked in for a *Kur* at the little Hanslbauer hotel in Bad Wiessee, not far from Munich. As word of his departure spread, the army was smug. Army Colonel Eduard Wagner wrote to his wife on June 11, a letter which we have: 'Rumour has it that Röhm won't be coming back.'

As for Himmler, he was curiously nonchalant about Röhm. When he lunched on June 6 with the Ribbentrops and the British ambassador, Phipps, he appears not to have discussed the SA at all, but only the Communist residue in Germany – ten thousand desperate men ready to run any risk for their cause. 'Herr Himmler,' Phipps reported to London, 'told me that the Communist danger was by no means over in Germany, where thousands of Communist propaganda leaflets were still distributed daily. . . Herr Himmler seems to share Herr von Papen's views of Russia, and asserted that any Communist activities in the British Colonies and the Dominions were due to the inspiration of that Power.'

'THE ACTION AGAINST RÖHM AND HIS consorts,' wrote a High Command expert later, 'was the first major operation based on the surveillance and research of the *Forschungsamt*.' Hitler had forbidden wiretaps on Party leaders, but that agency was tapping the phones of Schleicher and the French embassy. A French diplomat was heard encouraging Röhm that he might yet become 'the Bonaparte of the Third Reich.' Hitler feared that Germany was exposed to French intervention under the terms of Versailles: 'The slightest push from abroad would have brought the whole structure down like a house of cards,' he said in 1939. He expressed gratitude to the *Forschungsamt* for enlightening him about France's ambassador, André François-Poncet: 'I was reading all his despatches. I knew that Röhm was conducting treason with him.' The decoded despatches, he said, revealed the ambassador advising restraint until civil war broke out.

Himmler and General Göring sealed their blood-pact against Röhm on June 20 at a ceremony at Carinhall, Göring's new mansion in the Schorf Heath outside Berlin. The general had brought back from Sweden the remains of Carin von Fock, his late wife, for reburial in a lakeside crypt. He had invited all the brasshats to attend

the ceremony. Hitler and Göring watched strong men manhandle the sarcophagus into the crypt, while Himmler and 'Pili' Körner looked on – the 'managers' of the coming Night of the Long Knives, in Darré's telling phrase, now only days away. 'The first revolution was begun by the Führer,' Himmler heard Göring declaim at the Prussian State Council's meeting the next day, on June 21. 'If the Führer desires a second revolution, he will find us ready and waiting.'

FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REASONS, HITLER WAS under time constraints. President Hindenburg was now mortally ill and would not last long. Hitler visited him on June 21, and decided to act against Röhm. He conveyed this to Himmler the next day, the twenty-second. He talked only of 'replacing' Röhm, and offered Himmler the post of SA chief. Himmler declined – it would look as if he'd chopped down his old boss just to step into his shoes. He suggested instead Viktor Lutze, an unassuming SA commander from Hanover.

Hitler summoned Lutze. 'The Führer received me at once,' described Lutze in a private diary, which we have, 'took me into his study, and swore me by handshake to absolute secrecy until the whole affair had been settled.' The Gestapo had warned him, added Hitler, that Röhm intended to accuse the 'reactionary' Reichswehr of conspiring against Hitler. He planned to retire Röhm, and appoint Lutze as chief of staff of the SA. Himmler simultaneously told Baron von Eberstein that Röhm was planning a coup, and that SS units were to stand discreetly by.

The army liked the plan. On June 23 the army's commander-in-chief General von Fritsch began alerting units to the imminence of an SA coup d'état. He told district commanders like General Ewald von Kleist, commander in Breslau, to be on the alert. Colonel Friedrich Fromm formally instructed army officers to provide arms to the SS, assuring them that Himmler was on their side.

Himmler told Udo von Woyrsch, commanding the SS *Oberabschnitt* in Silesia, to come to Berlin next morning in plain clothes – and to watch his step. At Prinz-Albrechtstrasse Himmler tersely told him: 'The SA is plotting a coup.' Woyrsch asked him when. The Reichsführer shrugged: 'We don't know that ourselves!' but he

knew Silesia was 'the seat of the unrest.' He instructed Woyrsch to contact Kleist in Breslau and keep law and order at all costs using the provincial police and an SS unit which was standing by in Dresden.

Woyrsch saw a chance to settle old scores. Before leaving Himmler, he mentioned a few names for possible *Sicherheitsdienst* ministrations, including SS *Oberführer* Emil Sembach. (Himmler had already dismissed Sembach, a member of the Reichstag, for embezzlement and failing to end an affair with a woman of easy virtue.)

Himmler coolly told Woyrsch to wait for a codeword. He was to arrest Sembach and have him 'shipped' to Berlin – *überstellt*, a word later with a lethal connotation in SS jargon. When Woyrsch suggested another *bête noire* of his, Gauleiter Helmuth Brückner, a suspected homosexual, Himmler asked him to tread cautiously.

The German army and navy nodded assent to all this. The navy cancelled a staff study-cruise planned for the last week in June. Inevitably, word reached Röhm himself, now taking the cure in Bad Wiessee as ordered. A Bavarian informant told Röhm's deputy, SA *Gruppenführer* Fritz Krausser, and his chief of finance Karl Schreyer, in Krausser's office on June 23, that Hitler was casting about for a successor, and that Himmler had submitted suggestions. Since Schreyer had heard that Hitler and Röhm had buried the hatchet on June 4, he expressed scepticism, but the grapevine knew differently: it was now deadly serious, and there was no going back.

REINHARD HEYDRICH, Himmler's right-hand man, had moved up to Berlin during May from Munich's Leopold Strasse, to a corner office in the Gestapo building in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. His adjutant's room was adjacent to the office and Himmler was next to that.

Heydrich had ordered a watch kept on church leaders. After the National Socialists came to power the churches had continued to squabble, as Heydrich's files on the enemies of the state – now in Moscow – show. Listed way down at Number 7 was still Judea, the Jewish community; but above them at Number 6 came the monarchists, with the Protestant church still ranking fifth.

The Vatican had signed a Concordat in 1933, the first foreign state entering a treaty with Hitler. The Protestants remained turbulent,

and the appointment of a Reich Bishop inflamed them.

Heydrich's files show that the churches' feud crowded the SD horizon during this final week of June 1934, regardless of what else was happening in Munich. There had been a secret meeting of pastors in Nuremberg on June 27 earlier: 'While there was no direct attack on the new state,' reported an agent, 'it was there, loud and clear, all the same. They mouthed "Wolf Meyer"' – the Reich Bishop's nominee – 'but they meant the Reich Bishop. They inveighed against the "Reich Bishop" and meant the Führer himself.' On June 30 police headquarters in Nuremberg reported on the previous day's meeting, for which Meiser had come from Munich.

HEYDRICH JOINED HIMMLER in Berlin. 'When he left Munich,' recalled Lina, 'he had promised to return on June 30, to take me and our first child to Berlin.' But Heydrich phoned Lina from Berlin: it seemed that something had come up. So she settled back into Munich's Leopold Strasse. The street was soon cordoned off; she followed events. Röhm had been caught conspiring with the French ambassador, it seemed. 'I heard of all this,' recalled Lina, 'in Leopold Strasse, where I was staying, while our furniture had gone on ahead to Berlin.'

In Berlin, Heydrich negotiated with the SA high command in Munich as before. Writing on Gestapo notepaper to them on June 24, he commented blandly on the wording of a police certificate 'to be submitted by candidates for the SA or SS.'

On June 27 Göring left Berlin for a tour of the Rhineland; photographers snapped him leaving his plane in Cologne. In his absence, Heydrich called his regional SD chiefs to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse – Himmler was not present – and told them that he had 'sure Intelligence' that Röhm was planning a coup. Among targets for increased surveillance he named the police chief in Munich, SA *Obergruppenführer* August Schneidhuber. Dr Werner Best, his No. 2, objected that he considered Schneidhuber okay.

Heydrich disagreed; his card index had told him differently.

THERE WAS SOME CONFUSION IN THE EASTERN provinces. In Breslau, General von Kleist called in Edmund Heines, the local SA

commander, on June 28 to inquire about Röhm's intentions. Heines countered by inquiring about the army's intentions. Heines phoned Kleist that night that he was flying to Bad Wiessee to speak with Röhm. Kleist hurried to Berlin where he briefed von Fritsch and his chief of staff General Ludwig Beck. 'My impression is that somebody is trying to set the army and SA at each other's throats,' said Kleist. He referred explicitly in this context to Himmler: many of these stories could be traced back to him. Fritsch sent for Reichenau.

'You may well be right,' was Reichenau's comment. 'Too late now.'

General von Fritsch would surmise, writing in his handwritten memoirs, that Himmler and Reichenau both had 'a large part' in the events which followed.

HIMMLER HAD VOLUNTEERED the resources of the SS for any dirty work that had to be done, and Reichenau, close to the Party, accepted. There were two or three conferences at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, Karl Wolff recalled, at which Reichenau gave authority for the guns, ammunition and army transport to be supplied to Sepp Dietrich's *Leibstandarte* troops, who would be sent down to Bavaria by train.

Hitler left Berlin for the Ruhr, to attend the wedding of Gauleiter Josef Terboven, who was to marry Ilse Stahl, Dr Goebbels's secretary and old flame. From a suite in Essen's five-star Kaiserhof hotel, Hitler called Göring and Lutze to his suite soon after landing. 'Pili' Körner brought further scare stories from Himmler about the SA generals.

'I've heard enough,' said Hitler, 'Let's make an example of them.'

He sent Göring back to Berlin that same afternoon, with instructions to start the ball rolling in Prussia as soon as he received the codeword *Kolibri*, HUMMINGBIRD, from Munich. From that evening on, June 28, Himmler moved to Göring's villa in Leipziger Strasse, around the corner from Heydrich in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse.

Göring certainly took the Röhm threat seriously. On Friday, June 29, he told his deputy, Major-General Erhard Milch, to deploy their (still-secret) air force units to guard Berlin's airfields. Himmler's SS would round up the plotters and, as things turned out, execute them.

It had come to that. The first blood was about to be spilt.

23: *Blood on his Hands*

'THE MOOR HAS DONE HIS DUTY, THE MOOR may leave,' sneers a character in Friedrich von Schiller's drama, *Fiesco's Conspiracy at Genoa*. The taunt became a byword in the German language. In the middle of 1934 the SS applied it to Ernst Röhm. His time was up.

In the beginning, in the 1920s, Hitler had been the nobody and Röhm the coming man. Röhm had drummed up thousands to fight the Party's street battles. That time was now past, and Hitler was in power. The Party and Röhm's *Sturmabteilung* were no longer equals.

Some days earlier, Röhm already sensed that things were turning ugly. On June 26 he had gone for a drive with Schreyer, his finance chief, and parked near the Lake Tegernsee, where they would not be overheard. The others present were SA *Gruppenführer* Wilhelm Schmid and Röhm's chauffeur Max Vogel. Röhm asked Schreyer which side he was on. Schreyer declared himself for Röhm.

Röhm said that he had invited Hitler for a talk about the future. 'This can't go on. I would never have walked out of the League of Nations. I would not have signed that Concordat with Rome. And I don't want war.'

RUMOURS WERE swilling around Berlin. Where did propaganda minister Dr Goebbels stand? There were conflicting clues.

He had not detected the anti-Röhm undercurrents. He sympathised with him. British diplomats reported that Goebbels was backing Röhm. Rumours circulated in émigré newspapers that Himmler 'was hoping to overthrow Minister Goebbels . . . and that Goebbels no longer had the Führer's confidence.' Hitler wanted Goebbels where he could see him. He summoned his secretary Christa Schroeder to the Rhineland – and told her to bring Goebbels with her.

On June 28, word reached Berlin that despite Hitler's orders to go on furlough, the SA was mobilising. Lutze had an uneasy feeling, as he put it: 'I had the impression that certain circles had an interest in exacerbating things particularly now that the Führer was away from Berlin and could not see the written evidence for himself, but only hear of it by phone.' Puzzled by what was going on, as well he might be, Wilhelm Sander, SA commander Karl Ernst's chief of staff, issued this order: 'The sheer scale of the rumour-mongering and the pernicious, unsettling effect of these rumours, have caused me to reach the following agreement with the chief of the Gestapo, Reichsführer SS Himmler: Every such utterance is to be written down verbatim, regardless of who's behind it, together with the name and address of the person spreading the rumour. Section IIc will collect these and forward them from time to time to the adjutant of the Reichsführer SS, *Standartenführer* Wolf[f], who will order provisional arrests.'

Late that evening the SA chief was dining with General von Epp and others. Hitler phoned Röhm's adjutant Robert Bergman and told him that he himself wanted to meet the senior SA commanders at Bad Wiessee on the thirtieth. He explained to SA *Gruppenführer* Fritz Krausser, 'I want to dispose of misunderstandings.'

To spare others the inconveniences which now seemed inevitable, Hitler tipped off some of his old friends, like SA *Obergruppenführer* Karl-Siegmund Litzmann, son of the revered general: stay away from the SA leaders' conference in Wiessee.

ON JUNE 29 HIMMLER SENT OVER FROM BERLIN specific and alarming reports: Karl Ernst and his Brownshirts were planning to seize Berlin government buildings at five p.m. next day. Hitler repeated this to

the Reichstag a few days later, underlining that Ernst was defying orders to meet him at Bad Wiessee. Throughout that day, Himmler and Göring brought increasingly dire tidings to the Rhineland. The FA intercepts seemed to confirm that four or five p.m. on June 30 was zero hour. Göring sent 'Pili' Körner by plane to show Hitler the actual Brown Pages. 'I shall make an example of Röhm!' rasped Hitler, now in Bad Godesberg.

Dr Goebbels reached the Hotel Dreesen in Godesberg at four p.m. Goebbels's diary, which we opened in Moscow archives in 1992, reveals little of his shock upon learning that Röhm was doomed. 'Drawing blood,' was all he recorded. 'Gotta realise that mutiny costs them their neck. I agree with this. If do it you must, then ruthlessly.'

Hitler must have shown him the Brown Pages, because Goebbels, writing up his diary, summarised: 'Proof that Röhm was conspiring with [French ambassador] François-Poncet, Schleicher, and Strasser. So, action!' He recorded: 'After making up his mind the Führer is very calm. We pass the hours in discussions. Nobody must notice a thing. I talk with Lutze, the new [SA] chief of staff. He's very good.'

They whiled away the hours in Hitler's hotel suite. 'The Führer,' noted Goebbels, 'is tense but very firm. We all keep silent.' From Godesberg, Goebbels phoned Berlin to order police protection for his family. (We shall find Himmler similarly sending Marga to safety *early* on July 20, 1944.) Over dinner Hitler brought Sepp Dietrich up to speed on the plans; the barracks of his *Leibstandarte* regiment were at Lichterfelde, which had been the Prussian military academy. They had sent two hundred men down to Bavaria 'for an operation against Austria.' The remaining troops would stay in their barracks under the command of SS *Sturmbannführer* Jürgen Wagner. Dietrich was to phone from Bavaria for orders.

In Berlin, Himmler told Heydrich to send a message by teleprinter to Munich and order Dr Werner Best to meet Dietrich's men, and route their trucks so as not to alert Röhm. Heydrich ordered SS *Sturmbannführer* Carl-Albrecht Oberg to transfer operations to the Wittelsbach Palace where an office had a direct teleprinter connection to Berlin – they had none in Leopold Strasse yet. Toward midnight Berlin phoned a new report to Hitler's suite in the Rhineland – both

Lutze and Goebbels recorded it: 'The rebels are arming themselves,' wrote Goebbels. 'Not a moment to be lost.'

Seized by the drama, Hitler announced: 'Let's go.'

IN BERLIN, GENERAL WERNER VON FRITSCH HAD ordered Colonel Max von Viebahn to delay his regiment's departure from the training area at Döberitz, saying, 'something is afoot.' Temporarily commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul von Hase, the regiment was ordered to stand by to move into Berlin. There were already reports of clashes between the SA and the regular army. Heydrich learned from Dr Best that Munich's SA regiment (*Standarte*) had been marched off, destination unknown, alerted by mystery orders. In that city, SA *Gruppenführer* Wilhelm Schmid read an anonymous order: 'SA onto the streets,' it read. 'The Führer has decided against us!'

Baffled, both Schmid and police chief August Schneidhuber assured Adolf Wagner, the Bavarian Gauleiter and minister of the interior, that they were loyal to Hitler, but the strange order itself had vanished – Schmid suspected that Wagner had pocketed it; so he told his wife Martina. She was shortly to become his widow.

Dietrich arrived in Munich by plane at midnight and phoned Hitler back in the Rhineland as ordered: he was told to motor over to the little railroad station at Kaufering, and await the arrival of his troops from Berlin around five a.m. Dr Best also arrived at Kaufering, and watched the men detraining. The convoy of army trucks set off; shortly, Dietrich was ordered to be in Bad Wiessee by eleven a.m. He assumed that his men were to provide security for Hitler's conference at Bad Wiessee. Dr Best put his car at the head of the convoy, but somewhere between Bad Tölz and Wiessee word reached them that it was all over at Bad Wiessee.

HITLER HAD LEFT HIMMLER IN BERLIN. Hitler and taken off at two a.m. from Bonn's Hangelar airfield, with Julius Schaub, Dr Goebbels, secretary Christa Schroeder and Röhm's designated successor Victor Lutze. They landed at Oberwiesenfeld airfield in Munich two hours later. Army officers greeted the party. Hitler instructed General Wilhelm Adam's adjutant, 'Tell the general that I'm going

to drive out to Wiessee and shoot Röhm myself!' But he went first to Wagner's ministry of the interior, and ripped the insignia of rank from Schneidhuber and Schmid, and ordered them taken to the city's remand prison at Stadelheim.

It was five-thirty a.m. It took an hour to get to the lakeside Hanselbauer resort, in three open Mercedes limousines, taking Rudolf Hess. Accompanied by his chauffeur Julius Schreck, Schaub, and police officer Schmidbauer, Hitler stormed into the inn. 'Röhm, you're under arrest!' he shouted, using the familiar *Du* for the last time. The SA men were loaded aboard two buses which Schreck had rented, and taken to Stadelheim.

Back in the Brown House in Munich at ten a.m. Hitler ordered Goebbels to release the codeword HUMMINGBIRD to Berlin. At midday he addressed the other SA commanders in the Senate Room. His motivation was changing, subtly. He gave credit to Walter Buch, the Party's general counsel, for having called attention to the SA chief's perversion: 'Buch drew my attention to these Röhm things. I didn't believe him.' This *laudatio* did Buch few favours. Many Party comrades ostracised him for having betrayed Röhm; Himmler consoled him with the appointment as an honorary SS *Gruppenführer* on November 9, 1934 which allowed him to wear the now coveted black SS uniform, with the black-and-silver lanyard (which distinguished honorary SS generals from the real ones).

From General Adam's army headquarters Hitler shortly reported to Berlin that all the SA commanders were now under lock and key. 'I was aware of his weaknesses,' he said, referring to Röhm, 'but I hoped for a long time to be able to channel this affair along the right lines. It's all over now. It's been infinitely difficult for me to part with comrades who have fought in this struggle of ours for years on end. . . The scenes during our raid on Wiessee were more disgusting than I would ever have thought possible. Now I have laid down a clear line: the regular army is the only bearer of arms. . .'

UNTIL NOW HEINRICH HIMMLER HAD STAYED CLEAR of bloodshed. With his own hands he had never taken a life nor did he ever do so. He probably never saw a death until May 1940. Since getting the

orders on June 22 he had however directed Heydrich to draw up a list of names and run them by Hitler. The Himmler list shuttled back and forth two or three times, said Karl Wolff. It was not long. Seventeen names were approved for termination one way or the other.

On this day, June 30, 1934, he became a desktop killer.

The first targets were shot out of hand. In Breslau, Himmler's blue-blooded SS *Gruppenführer* Udo von Woyrsch had the SA commanders executed, including SA *Obergruppenführer* Edmund Heines. Shortly before nine a.m., Woyrsch had been urgently summoned by phone to police headquarters from his estate, ordered to arrest Heines. After an hour, related Woyrsch, an SA officer had phoned from Oppeln to speak with Heines. It was one of Woyrsch's men, a *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) officer, who took the call.

'Is it on?' asked the caller. 'Should I come over to Breslau?'

'Yes,' said the SD man. The caller was intercepted, and his car found to be loaded with automatic weapons bearing the Oppeln police-headquarters stamp.

Among those targeted was the former SS *Oberführer* Emil Sembach; Sembach's offence was that after dismissal from the SS – for embezzlement – he had deserted to the SA (his name was camouflaged on the official list as 'Sassbach,' a clue that his killing was unauthorised). Two others marked for killing were SA *Oberführer* Joachim Hoffmann and his sidekick Gustav Fink of the SS, who had maltreated prisoners in the SS camp set up in Stettin, as Diels said. Himmler was behind these killings. He may also have ordered the killing of the former director of political police in Stuttgart, Dr Hermann Mattheiss; he had opposed Himmler's appointment as chief of Political Police, despite being an SS *Standartenführer* himself.

SEPP DIETRICH ALSO GOT his orders. His belated arrival at the Brown House that midday, redirected from Kaufering to Munich, had irritated an already nervous Hitler. In Munich, Dietrich found army cordons everywhere. Martin Bormann came out of the Brown House and escorted him inside. The SS officer was lodged in an adjutant's room for most of the afternoon, unable to follow what was happening on the other side of the double doors. He heard muffled shouting;

once he asked Wilhelm Brückner, Hitler's adjutant, what was going on. Brückner would not say.

Shortly before flying back to Berlin at five p.m. Hitler had Bormann bring in Dietrich; Bormann turned a list of seven names over to him. Ernst Röhm's was the only one not marked with a cross. Dietrich was to take his men to Stadelheim prison and execute the other six for treason. Dietrich took Josias Prince zu Waldeck – dressed in black SS uniform – and six riflemen with him. It did not go smoothly. The prison governor, Robert Koch, phoned the Bavarian minister of justice, Hans Frank, and refused to hand over the prisoners.

Frank arrived with a *Ministerialrat*, and ordered the prisoners turned over to the Landespolizei. Röhm was brought in, still baffled, and asked Frank to take care of his mother and sisters. But his name was not on the list for shooting. The other six were dragged separately to a wall that Waldeck had selected and dealt with as instructed.

There was nothing by way of due process. 'I drove back out there out of sheer interest,' Dietrich testified later, 'and saw that the police had taken over my firing squad.' He saw the body of Schneidhuber, an old comrade of his. Heydrich telexed to Dr Best at the Wittelsbach Palace to pick up Gustav von Kahr – who had betrayed the Hitler Putsch. They took him out to Dachau. Eicke's men had no liking for this 'traitor of November 9, 1923,' and dealt with him too; Dr Best would testify that Heydrich seemed annoyed when told. General von Epp barely managed to save his adjutant from a firing squad.

On this day and the next, Dr Best's men put to death a total of twenty-eight such 'traitors' in southern Germany. He struck from the execution list a number of names, including the writer Ernst Jünger and thinkers like Ernst Niekisch and Hans Zehrer. Hitler also intervened once or twice. Before boarding his plane at Oberwiesenfeld to fly back to Berlin, he told Epp, 'I have pardoned Röhm because of his services, and Krausser for his war decorations' – SS *Gruppenführer* Fritz von Krausser was a decorated World War aviator; but he was on Hermann Göring's list – jotted in Göring's red-linen bound pocket diary we find this evaluation: 'Krausser: on Röhm's staff. Extreme caution. Agitating particularly against me.' Krausser was shot too.

Some escaped death by oversight. Schreyer was among those

marked to attend that conference at Bad Wiessee but his fellow-passenger from Munich, Wilhelm von Schorlemer, overslept. Halted on the way out to the Hanselbauer by Lutze and warned of what was going on, Schreyer diverted to Starnberg and escaped; the posse sent after him 'took out' an employee instead. Schreyer was arrested only later, along with Röhm's deputy Krausser, his foreign-policy chief von Detten and von Falkenhausen. All were flown to Berlin. Incarcerated in the Gestapo's new Columbia Haus prison at Potsdamer Platz, Schreyer was overlooked while the other three were removed to the execution wall at Lichterfelde. By the time Schreyer was discovered two days later, Hitler had ordered a halt to the executions. After four years, Schreyer was released.

WHERE WAS HIMMLER IN ALL THIS? Göring had moved to protect him and the rest. Göring had sent for every person he deemed to be in danger. In Berlin's government district, his villa was temporarily protected by machine-guns and sandbags. The villa was crowded with the notables of Party and government. 'My house looked like a castle of refuge,' he scoffed years later. 'Even Herr Frick [Minister of Justice] came slinking in, pale as a sicked-up pea!' Franz von Papen, still Hitler's vice-chancellor, did not appreciate the danger building up, and Göring had to phone him at 8:45 a.m. 'In his room,' Papen told a British officer in 1945, 'I meet him and Himmler. "Something very grave is happening in Munich," says Göring. "A revolution has broken out. The Führer has left me in charge here in Berlin."'

Papen spluttered, 'I want to know what's going on – what countermeasures we're taking.'

'You'll have to leave me alone now,' Göring said. 'My head's bursting. We've got to see how we can crush this thing.'

He murmured something to Himmler, who then left the room. Papen heard Himmler's voice, phoning nearby: 'You can go in now!'

GÖRING HAD RECEIVED THE CODEWORD HUMMINGBIRD at about ten a.m., phoned by Goebbels from Munich, and called a sinister conference in an inner office of the villa. Wedged into an outsize Gold-trimmed throne upholstered in red velvet, Göring presided

from behind a fifteen-foot long desk, an oaken slab four inches thick. Cigars were handed round, and Himmler took his place. His chief of staff Karl Wolff was also there. Everybody was seated in easy chairs. Among the others were von Fritsch, General von Reichenau, the chief of staff of the still-secret air force General Walther Wever, Göring's deputy General Erhard Milch, and their close friend 'Pili' Körner.

Fifty years ago Milch, the only surviving eye-witness, described this cabal to us. Himmler held a tattered list, probably compiled by Heydrich, who remained at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. He was slowly reciting names from the list. If everybody nodded assent, a mark was made. At one point Göring handed a list to a Gestapo official and packed him off to Breslau with instructions to SS *Gruppenführer* Udo von Woyrsch. Wolff said that the Reichsführer Himmler radiated his usual bonhomie, but occasionally spoke up for clemency. Heydrich argued that this opportunity for a *tabula rasa* was unlikely to recur. Göring demurred when the name of Rudolf Diels came up, and he scratched out the name of the diplomat von Bülow too.

So it went on. Göring had already sent his *Landespolizei* to pick up General von Schleicher, to be tried for treason. 'These many then shall die,' proclaims Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. 'Their names are prick'd. . . He shall not live. Look, with a spot I damn him!'

As each name was read out, Göring and Reichenau shook their head, or nodded. Himmler spelt out the name concerned to Körner, adding the laconic instruction: '*Vollzugsmeldung*' – report back. Göring kept Hindenburg informed. Milch recalled to us one macabre episode – one of those present joked that they should add Baroness Viktoria von Dirksen to the list. The tiresome aunt of an ambassador, she had made a name in Party circles for displaying just too much zeal ('A thousandfold Sieg Heil, mein Führer!') The room shook with laughter at the thought of the frightful baroness before a firing squad.

Inevitably, there were flaws. Göring personally raided the Berlin headquarters of SA *Gruppenführer* Karl Ernst. 'As I looked by chance out of the window,' he claimed unabashed years later, 'I saw to my amazement that my troops were staggering out under crates of machine-guns and ammunition.' But Ernst himself was not there.

Notwithstanding his fame as a homosexual, Ernst had left for Bremen to join a Deutscher Lloyd steamer to Tenerife on a honeymoon – he had married Minnes Wolff in the presence of Röhm a few days before.

THROUGHOUT THAT DAY, SCORES WERE SETTLED in Germany. Between ten and eleven a.m. Heydrich sent thirty of his men to deal with Papen's press chief, Herbert von Bose; wiretaps had revealed him plotting too. The posse led Bose to an unoccupied conference room. Ten shots were heard in rapid succession, followed by an eleventh some moments later: the *coup de grâce*.

Around the same time Gestapo HQ ordered Kurt Gildisch to report with a squad of SS men to Heydrich. Gildisch, a hard-drinking SS *Hauptsturmführer* of thirty, had been sacked from Hitler's bodyguard and seconded to Dietrich's regiment in Lichterfelde. Heydrich gave the steel-helmeted Gildisch the current official line, that Röhm had attempted a coup against Hitler. Gildisch was to raid the Transport Ministry and arrest *Ministerialrat* Erich Klausener and take him and others to a place of execution. Nebe had put Klausener on the list for a hostile speech. Klausener had been an ally of Albert Grzesinski, the Prussian police chief who had prudently fled into exile. Gildisch shot him down. He denied it (but was convicted later of the murder).

By lunchtime Kurt von Schleicher too was dead. The general had offered the vice-chancellorship to Himmler's mentor, Gregor Strasser, in December 1932, in the hope of thwarting Hitler; Strasser had accepted, which sealed his own fate. Since then the *Forschungsamt* had heard Schleicher negotiating with the French. Göring sent police to Potsdam to bring him in, but Heydrich got to him first – his five assassins burst into the Schleicher villa in Griebnitzstrasse, confirmed that he was the general, and gunned him down.

'Only cock-up,' echoed Dr Goebbels with a belated display of steely resolution: 'Frau Schleicher bought it too. Tough, but can't be helped.' (Göring said that Schleicher's wife got in the way.) Blomberg excused it to the British ambassador by arguing that even if the general had not drawn his revolver when the 'police' came he would still have been shot that evening for treasonably plotting with a foreign power. The FA was still bugging Schleicher's phone when detectives used it

to call the ministry of justice to report that he had been the victim of 'a political assassination.' Göring advised that the official version would be quite different – 'shot resisting arrest.'

By early afternoon of June 30 the Berlin press was already touting the new line. The emphasis on treason was soft-pedalled – the purge had become a crusade against homosexual filth. *BZ am Mittag*, an Ullstein afternoon newspaper, issued a free newssheet: 'When the arrests were carried out,' this proclaimed, describing the earlier scenes at Bad Wiessee, 'they yielded scenes of such moral turpitude that no trace of pity can remain. Some of these SA leaders had taken rent-boys with them. The Führer ordered the merciless lancing of this plague-abscess' – for *lancing*, the communiqué used a German term we shall hear more often in these pages: *Ausrottung*.

AT TEN P.M. GÖRING MET HITLER and his party at Tempelhof, as they flew in from Munich. Himmler was at Tempelhof too; he was the hero of the day. Hitler complimented Göring on the men drawn up in uniform to receive him – four hundred men of the secret Luftwaffe – saying: 'The men have been well chosen for their race.'

Göring revealed that he had taken the liberty of adding a few names to the hit-lists, including General von Schleicher. As for Gregor Strasser, he was taken to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, and murdered in Cell 15 by a single shot. The Party termed Strasser's death a suicide too: a useful smear. It was a poor recompense for the man to whom Himmler owed so much.

Hitler heard Göring's wider tally without enthusiasm; in fact he was livid. He ordered Himmler to set up a fund for the SA commanders' widows; Schleicher's young stepdaughter was provided with 250 marks a month until adulthood, and the son of General von Bredow, another victim, 150 marks a month toward his education.

RETURNING TO PRINZ-ALBRECHTSTRASSE, GILDISCH received orders from Heydrich to fly at once to Bremen and arrest SA-*Gruppenführer* Karl Ernst, who had by then been detained at the airfield there.

Gildisch and his six-man snatch squad brought Ernst back in manacles that evening, with his adjutant *Hauptsturmführer* Martin

Kirschbaum. General Milch, loyally waiting for Hitler on the Tempelhof tarmac, witnessed the luckless man's arrival. Gildisch took Ernst direct to Gestapo HQ, but there was no time like the present, and Heydrich ordered him taken straight out to Lichterfelde; to witness Ernst's execution, and to report back – *Vollzugsmeldung*.

Arriving there, Gildisch turned Ernst over, still manacled, to SS *Sturmbannführer* Wagner. With much rattling of bolts and reloading of musketry the riflemen provided by Sepp Dietrich despatched the SA traitors. Hjalmar Schacht's nephew was one of the shooters, apprehensive that at any moment he might find his uncle dragged in. According to the list drawn up by the Gestapo, fourteen people were shot here. Stiff manacled, Ernst was violated (*geschändet*) in a side room, then driven out to a suitable wall behind the morgue. They could not find the keys to his handcuffs. Shaken, puzzled, but defiant, Ernst spurned a blindfold. He managed to rip open his shirt, and shouted to the four riflemen: 'Aim well, comrades!'

'Long live Germany!' he added, before the salvoes rang out.

Gildisch had one more chore to perform – to fetch from the Gestapo headquarters Ernst's accomplice, Dr Erwin Villain, alleged to have helped organise Ernst's orgies. Villain was brought in wearing beach costume, and stood against that now pock-marked wall.

As one distinguished aviator to another, Göring had been minded to spare Ernst's adjutant Gerth, who had survived the pistol duel earlier that month, this last disgrace. He gave Gerth an hour to shoot himself, then he too was brought before the firing squad.

HIMMLER HAD SPENT the day closeted at General Göring's villa. His personal assistant Rudi Brandt noted that while Himmler acknowledged General Göring as his superior, he did not like the way that Göring let things drift. Lacking war medals, as Karl Wolff nastily pointed out later, the Reichsführer tried to impress people with diligence and application. According to Wolff, phone records showed 7,200 calls from this building over the three days that the purge lasted. The local SD commanders were left no room for manoeuvre. It was as though Himmler and Heydrich had not left Munich for Berlin six weeks before, taking most of their best officers with them –

Müller, Franz Josef Huber, Josef Meisinger, and a host of others. SS *Brigadeführer* Alfred Rodenbücher, who had commanded the SS *Oberabschnitt* Austria since February 15, stood by at the Wittelsbach Palace. Berlin streamed orders to him all day by teleprinter. Dr Best recalled several lists of names, marked with crosses, rattling off the teleprinter – one, two, or three, the differing significance of which he could not later recall: perhaps watch, arrest, and execute.

Berlin soon heard protests from Dr Best about intended victims: the Darmstadt Gauleiter Jakob Sprenger had ordered the arrest of two local SA officers, Brigadeführer Dr Otto Ivers und Karl Lucke, as rebels to be 'dealt with' like the rest. Best told Heydrich by teleprinter that these two men were 'okay,' and Heydrich ordered them released.

Himmler also intervened in some cases, usually for men whom he knew personally. Werner 'Bubi' von Alvensleben was one, a conservative whom Schleicher had used as go-between to Hindenburg and Röhm. Alvensleben got a call through to Himmler just as the hit squad arrived; Himmler told their commander that he would pay with his life if they killed Alvensleben. (Hitler was notably coy about this man, when he made his speech to the Reichstag on July 16, saying only: 'Röhm established contact with General von Schleicher by means of a totally corrupt con-man, a Mr von A.')

Röhm's own adjutant Bergmann was arrested, but he was a *Gruppenführer* in Himmler's SS; the story was that he had returned to Munich after Hitler had called a halt. Himmler and Wolff subsidised his existence and even financed his daughter's education. SS *Gruppenführer* Rolf Rainer, Röhm's bureau chief, was also spared. Adolf Hühnlein was another who escaped. Count Spreti, far less important than Bergmann or Rainer, but not an SS officer, was shot.

Hans Frank was troubled by the day's sheer lawlessness. Hitler lectured him on revolutions citing the weakness of the judge in 1924 in letting him off, a revolutionary, with prison. Others were quietly taken off the list. Erich Koch, Gauleiter of East Prussia was one: 'Actually,' said Göring a few days later to the leading criminal lawyer Count von der Goltz, 'the Führer wanted him bumped off too, but others spoke up for him.' Göring pretended that he argued with Hitler throughout that Sunday, July 1, begging him to put an end

to the shootings. 'The executions then halted,' he said, 'even though this meant that two of the Führer's worst enemies, von Alvensleben and Moulin-Eckart, escaped with their lives.' Count Leon Du Moulin-Eckart, once director of Röhm's Intelligence service, escaped ostensibly because the plane bringing him to Berlin had a problem: more likely was that Himmler spared this man too.

Goebbels lunched with Hitler that Sunday, and found him pale and angry. 'Göring renders his report,' wrote Goebbels. 'Executions almost over. A few still needed. It's tough but necessary. . . One final sweep and we're through the worst.' He saw Hitler 'suffering badly' that afternoon as further death sentences were pronounced 'with the utmost gravity' – by whom, Goebbels did not say: 'Around sixty all told.' Klausener's murder, like Strasser's, was listed as suicide. Dietrich reported the Stadelheim executions to Hitler at seven p.m., and was promoted to *Obergruppenführer* as a reward. He found Hitler deep in discussion with the army generals Fritsch, Blomberg, and Reichenau, and the minister of justice Franz Gürtner.

RÖHM WAS IN STADELHEIM PRISON but still alive. While Hitler was minded to spare him, Himmler and Göring argued for Röhm to be executed too. Hitler demanded to be put through to Röhm's deputy, Krausser, whom he had ordered spared ('for his medals'); too late, Göring had ordered him shot a few hours earlier.

Confined in his corner cell, No. 474, in Stadelheim prison, Röhm's time came. Hitler ruled that he should be offered suicide. SS *Brigadeführer* Theodor Eicke and his deputy Michael Lippert drove out to the prison bringing the 'offer'. The horrified prison governor phoned Hans Frank; Frank told him just to keep a written record.

Eicke ordered Röhm's cell door unlocked, and the two men pushed into the cell. Onlookers thronged the corridor. Their victim, puffy-faced and pink, looked a bit like Benny Hill. He was writing something. They slapped a *Völkischer Beobachter* on the table. The headlines were, RÖHM REVOLTS, and SA LEADERS SHOT. Eicke placed a pistol loaded with one bullet on top and said: 'Röhm, your life is forfeit. The Führer has given you the chance of carrying out the sentence yourself.' Röhm did not touch the loaded gun.

Twenty minutes passed. Eicke told the jailer to retrieve the pistol. He and Lippert cocked their weapons and stood outside the open door. 'Time's up,' Eicke called out. The unfinished writing was on the table. Röhm stood and faced them, chest bared. Eicke directed his comrade: 'Take aim calmly and shoot.' Each fired one shot. Röhm dropped. Eicke ordered his deputy to finish him; Lippert stepped inside, put another bullet into the dying man's neck, and left.

Eicke turned to the jailer. 'Do not resuscitate,' he commanded.

He reported his foul deed in writing to Himmler. To a prisoner at Dachau he bragged, 'I'm proud to have shot the filthy bugger.' 'If a big-shot sticks his neck out,' he boasted on another occasion, using the noun *Prominente*, 'it takes another big-shot to finish him off.'

MARTIN BORMANN'S DIARY had originally named seven victims, including Karl Ernst. Ultimately, an official list knew of over eighty; the final number was possibly more. Unsurprisingly, the whole operation had ratcheted upwards, out of control. In Munich, they had arrested the wrong Wilhelm Schmid, a musician, and liquidated him before getting the real target, an SA *Gruppenführer*. They had also killed one of Hitler's closest earlier friends, the pastor Bernard Stempfle: 'Of course,' conceded Göring later, 'in the general excitement some mistakes were made.' 'Terrible!' wrote Goebbels piously in his diary, hearing of the shooting of SA *Brigadeführer* Karl von Wechmar in Breslau. 'A lot of things happened that did not entirely accord with the Führer's will. Fate! Victims of the revolution!'

On the night of July 1–2, Hitler called a halt. Catching the chaotic, frantic atmosphere of those hours, Himmler's right-hand man Karl Wolff scrawled a personal message to his wife, Frieda: 'Still in the thick of enormous work caused by the Röhm Mutiny, until three or four a.m., and even then phone rings every ten minutes after that. You're fit to drop – but you're rid of a nightmare.'

HITLER'S HALT ORDER saved several who had gone to ground. His role was less than History would have us believe, but his conscience was still not easy. Stomach ailments began; to his doctor he later said they dated from the shooting of his old friend Röhm. The

adjutants including Brückner and Schaub described Hitler's fury when Himmler reported the final tally to him. Victor Lutze, who became a foe of the SS, echoed their account. When inebriated, he alleged that the SS had set Röhm up and then bamboozled Hitler with talk of gunpowder, treason, and plot. Hitler probably realised that Himmler, Göring and the Reichswehr had all manipulated him. He visited Goebbels later and said he now saw things 'quite clearly.' 'Lutze has become suspicious too,' wrote Goebbels.

The scale of the killings had mushroomed. Hitler had authorised seven killings, growled Lutze. Then it was seventeen, but here was Himmler bringing a final list of five times that number. 'The Führer was thus put in the embarrassing position of having to sanction *all eighty-two killings* afterwards.' Robert Ley made the same point in a manuscript he wrote in captivity. Magda Goebbels went further that Christmas, caring for all the widows. Learning of the straits of the families arrested, Himmler 'spontaneously' told the Party's Welfare organisation to look after them. So Werner Best recalled.

BROADCASTING THAT SUNDAY, GOEBBELS CAREFULLY praised the loyalty of Himmler's SS. President Hindenburg telegraphed to Hitler congratulations for his 'energetic and victorious action.' On Monday evening July 2 Göring organised a crab-feast for all those involved – his 'murder managers' Himmler, Blomberg, Körner, and Milch. Half a dozen years later, when the real killing began, these shindigs would become a part of the process; Heydrich would order his 'task forces' to lay on *Kameradschaftsabende*, with much alcohol, and movies shown in field-cinemas, to distract them from the bloody business of the day.

It does seem clear that the Intelligence furnished to Hitler, while not totally counterfeit, had been enhanced by Göring, Heydrich, and the army. It was not the last 'dodgy dossier' produced by an Intelligence service for its political master.

Meeting on Tuesday, the Cabinet heard Hitler's account. Speaking 'in all their names' General von Blomberg welcomed the Chancellor's ruthless action. Hitler said the Reich had teetered on the brink of an abyss. The Cabinet minutes record that he accepted full responsibility,

'even if the degree of blame had not been established in every case, and even if he had not ordered all the executions by firing squad.'

Ten days later Hitler spoke a colder language. He rehearsed the official version to the Reichstag on July 13. Flanked by four steel-helmeted SS men acting like the guard-dogs in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, he reported: 'Nineteen senior SA commanders, thirty-one SA officers and SA men were shot, together with three SS officers. The lives of thirteen SA officers and civilians who resisted arrest were also forfeited. Three more committed suicide. Five members of the Party who were not SA men were shot for participation. Finally, three other SS men were shot for abusive treatment of prisoners in their custody.'

The international press kicked up a hullaballoo when the names were published. Foreign journalists listed thirty-nine other victims — most of whom were still alive, as Heydrich smugly wrote to Dr Goebbels; the names of alleged victims included Count von Helldorff, Werner von Alvensleben, Manfred von Killinger, the widow of Karl Ernst, and Kahr's cronies in 1923, Seisser, and Lossow.

NAGGING DOUBTS DID CROP UP. HOW FAR HAD Heydrich and Himmler embroidered upon the 'plot'? If Röhm had been planning a coup on June 30, would he have sent his 'army' on furlough from July 1? As Baron von Eberstein said, would an old hand like Röhm have just checked into a resort hotel without any bodyguard? On the other hand, Röhm had indeed earmarked Karl Ernst as his ambassador in Paris; the documents were found among his papers, according to Ernst's widow. Ernst was bisexual; that he was brought before a firing squad might seem an unsatisfactory start for any honeymoon.

Few tears were wept over the victims, and the regime spared itself no libels on them. The scenes witnessed at Bad Wiessee were embellished with scandalising detail. Nothing about the orgies was true, protested Schreyer, and even Röhm was not really homosexual, he said; he had once witnessed an episode in which Röhm had come onto (*vorgeknöpft*) a half-Jewess facing him in a railroad compartment. Heines was not found in bed with a rent-boy, as Schreyer pointed out, and his sexuality too was ambivalent – he had fathered a boy with Countess von Helldorff (the child died aged nine in a traffic accident).

Given the notoriously heterosexual nature of Heydrich we can suspect whose hand was behind the prurient tones daubed onto the victims, which the prim Himmler readily believed, whereas Heydrich's own adjutant described how his boss liked picking up pretty girls in bars. He was once arrested after brawling with an enraged boyfriend; the Berlin police released him in dismay, after he produced his ID. 'Heydrich,' said Sepp Dietrich in 1950, 'was head and shoulders above Himmler – clever and single-minded.'

Was he therefore the real driving force in all that happened?

AS FOR RÖHM, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE DID harbour ambitions, but there was no firm date attached. There had been bloodthirsty chatter: SA-*Standartenführer* Julius Uhl, commander of Röhm's personal bodyguard, was heard boasting that he had been selected to kill Hitler. The army general Hans von Thoma would reminisce, 'Röhm said to me quite openly at the time, "Just you wait until we're top dog – the masses are just excrement – we will make things sweet for ourselves and as for the rest, we'll do things Russian-style."'

Heydrich mopped up all paper-trails. He ordered his man Carl Oberg to destroy all execution orders telexed to Bavaria, though one set of copies was retained at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. In the Wittelsbach Palace, Oberg showed Dr Best unappetising items found in Röhm's luggage at Bad Wiessee, and Goebbels broadcast an explicit account. 'At the time I believed it,' Karl Wolff would concede, 'after the one-sided and negative briefings I had from the lips of my own chief.'

Rumours circulated long after. Some people close to the Party claimed that Himmler had double-crossed the plotters. The son of Count von Helldorff was heard to say (ten years later, and almost on the same day that his father was hanged as a real traitor): 'The Thirtieth of June was actually nothing other than the prelude to Himmler's assumption of power. . . Himmler, of course, was let into the secret and declared himself in complete agreement, but at the very last minute, just as the balloon was about to go up, he went to the Führer and told him. That's why it blew up in their faces.'

In line with the official version, Himmler shifted his emphasis from the 'foreign plot' to Röhm's perversions. Justifying the bloody

purge to his commanders, he dwelt on what he called the 'biological-political reasons' for it, namely the character of the SA leadership. 'A habit engaged in by female secretaries might be no danger,' Himmler said, 'but it might well prove catastrophic for a state if engaged in by officers and officials, etc.' This particular perversion, homosexuality, was the chink favoured by foreign espionage. Warming to his theme, he also condemned abortion, calling it 'the other death' for any nation; turning to Wolff afterwards, Rudolf Hess remarked: 'That is the most brilliant presentation I have ever listened to.' Paul Leffler, Heydrich's SD bureau chief in Munich, later applauded the purge as an 'absolutely necessary' cleansing process. It was a popular view.

As for Röhm's alleged contact with the French authorities, this would have been *Landesverrat*, treason, but there is little supporting evidence. Dr Werner Best learned from two reliable agents in the Saar region that on June 28 and 29 *garde mobile* units, the French gendarmerie, were being sent from Nancy to villages along the Lorraine and Saar frontiers; three hundred gendarmes had been seen in the streets of Forbach in Lorraine alone. To one SD agent's query, the locals had explained, 'A revolution is said to be breaking out in Germany on June 30 or Sunday July 1.' This may have been just a French reaction to the SD's own rumour-mongering.

The three days of bloodshed revealed an unsuspected side of Himmler, that of a calculating commissioner of killings, showing no remorse. Pushed by Heydrich and Göring, the young Reichsführer had played a major part in propelling Hitler into this dramatic purge and splashing blood onto his hands. This was the deeper significance of the episode: not for the last time, he had taken the initiative in killing in Hitler's name.

24: *In a Blur, like a Movie*

A SUCCESSFUL MOGUL OFTEN OWES HIS SUCCESS to one employee in the background. This would be Himmler's personal assistant Rudolf Brandt, rather than his preening chief adjutant Karl Wolff.

Brandt came to SS headquarters when he was twenty-four. It was probably his first real job. He was the only son of a railroad foreman. His young wife was sickly, and he rarely got to see his two children, Jürgen and Elke. His hair was brown, his complexion sallow, and he wore glasses: he was something of a nerd. He was never punished at school; he was drunk only once, as a student. He did not smoke or drink; he had taught himself to swim, was frightened of the dark, and – like Himmler, his future boss – uninterested in fortune. Those who knew him called him a product of 'true' National Socialism (that is, not what it later became). His defence lawyer would later characterize him harshly as 'intellectually insignificant.' Clumsy but morally impeccable, he would be easily led astray by men like Himmler.

Like many bright children, he had one passionate hobby: his was writing Stolze-Schrey shorthand. He knew only one ambition, to become a verbatim Parliamentary stenographer – which was an elite among elites: he perfected his shorthand while still at school,

until his pen flew across the page at 360 syllables a minute. He became the perfect private secretary, his colleague Wölfchen called him Himmler's 'memory'; knowing everything, but offering to remember nothing. In a self-serving statement, August Meine, who joined Himmler's staff after Brandt, would suggest that Himmler had avoided having newcomers deal with murkier matters like the 'destruction of the Jews,' as they went through Brandt's hands.

To become a civil servant in Germany the softly spoken 'Rudi' Brandt had had to take a law degree as well. It was as 'Dr' Brandt that he joined Wolff's staff a few weeks after entering the SS in October 1933. Himmler took him over on February 15, 1934. When Himmler moved to Berlin, he had brought Brandt with him. The young man remained indispensable, and fatally indifferent to the items which the busy Reichsführer required him to sign on his behalf. 'The seducer is always guiltier than the person seduced,' argued counsel at his trial.

BRANDT WOULD STAY WITH HIMMLER UNTIL one day before the end, converting the flow of dictation into flawless shorthand, and from that into a stream of minutes, messages, and memoranda, from morning to night, and thinly rewarded with a late promotion to *Standartenführer,* or colonel. He handled three thousand pieces of mail every month, covering the entire range of Himmler's activities. 'It went past me in a blur,' he would testify later, 'like a movie.'

Brandt often worked a fifteen- or sixteen-hour day. His working day had started before seven a.m. He had to be an early riser, while Himmler worked far into the night – until two a.m. as a rule. At nine-thirty the courier brought the main mail. Himmler rose at ten, and breakfasted with Brandt, after Wolff transferred to the Führer headquarters: 'Himmler,' recalled Brandt, 'always had to have somebody with him at breakfast.' He came into Himmler's bathroom with the latest mail and read it out to him as he shaved, and took down the replies for the next twenty minutes.

He sat outside Himmler's office and waited for the summons. Himmler treated 'Rudi' like a useful piece of furniture. He would buzz for him, turn to his current visitor, flap a hand, and say, 'Whenever you have questions, write to Dr Brandt or give him a call.' Before

ushering visitors out, Himmler would invariably inquire about their well-being and about their financial situation – he would instruct Brandt to provide funds, and where the visitors had yet to produce any offspring he would helpfully direct Brandt to provide to them the address of a certain Professor Knaus and his Prague clinic. Dr Benno Martin, the police chief of Nuremberg, would describe how Himmler once summoned Brandt. 'Himmler did not ask him to take a seat. He stood at the table taking notes.' Walter Schellenberg, whom we have yet to meet, would echo this: 'On account of his talents as a Master Stenographer, his punctuality, his tireless diligence, he became for Himmler a comfortable – I would even say *user-friendly* – automat, registering, writing, and remembering everything.' Files were strewn all around his office and even on the floor, said Schellenberg. Rudi handled the complaints and Christmas gift-lists. Himmler instructed him to leave no letter unanswered.

As the volume of correspondence grew, Brandt began dictating from his own shorthand notes to relays of typists. He sent out letters of congratulation to mothers of SS men bearing second, third, fourth or later children – and a gift box with fruit juices, and a porcelain candlestick for the newborn child. Encouraged by 'this one letter,' he grimly recalled, the mothers often began a copious correspondence with Himmler. Brandt had known poverty as a child and student, and threw himself into these charitable endeavours with great industry.

Allowed finally to testify about his chief, Brandt expressed the obligatory disapproval of him, 'because of the crimes he committed' but also 'because he committed suicide.' That British smear had worked again, but Brandt could not withhold admiration of this human dynamo: 'He dictated letters to me,' said Brandt, 'in trains, airplanes, and automobiles, in the morning and at all hours of the day and night.' Himmler was modest, and polite to his servants; unlike his contemporaries, he did not act the 'big-shot.'

Himmler was considerate toward the widows and children of his fallen SS men; he ensured that all received Christmas presents, while 'every woman who turned to him' could be assured of assistance. 'Himmler loved children,' he said, 'and played Godfather to a large number.' 'The correspondence about Himmler's many Godchildren

took up a good deal of my time,' Rudolf Brandt recalled.

OVER MEALS BRANDT OFTEN HEARD Himmler expand on his ideas – how he wanted to create a healthy working class, and to extend credit to manual workers and peasants so that they too could build. The Nordic race was 'destined to take over the leadership' in Europe. Men from all nations should be given an opportunity in peaceful competition to prove their fitness for leadership. A greater German Reich was to be merely the precursor of this Nordic community.

If a guest objected that Germany should hardly share leadership with lesser peoples like the Dutch or Swedes or Danes, Himmler offered an analogy from the football league: One year might see it led by a major team from a large city, and the next by a small, unknown team. Thus the leadership of Europe should change hands from time to time, so that each nation could do its best for the new Europe. This, said Brandt, was why most of the European nationalities – ultimately seventeen of them – were represented in Himmler's Waffen-SS.

After one conference on sterilisation, as the record shows, 'The Reichsführer-SS emphasized to all of us participating that we were here concerned with top secret matters intended only for internal discussion, and upon which absolute secrecy had to be maintained.'

AS BRANDT CONFESSED, HE WORKED FOR TWELVE YEARS close to the heart of 'one of the mightiest and most dangerous of men,' but he admitted, 'I never knew Himmler's soul.' Addressing the question of personal guilt, he pondered whether he had been too trusting, or 'whether . . . throughout all these years I lived like a hermit, with my eyes closed.' Some of the items which crossed his desk were noxious beyond belief, like the ongoing files on wartime SS experiments to find ways of surviving attack by phosgene gas or bacterial warfare, or surviving on salt-water, or in low-pressure and low-temperature conditions, and files on epidemic jaundice, and discussions of the elimination of entire tubercular populations (proposed by occupation forces in Poland, though not actually carried out).

All such medical matters are chilling to the layman. They are as odious as curious Allied doctors securing the skulls and brains of their

enemies including Mussolini and Himmler, when the time came: the difference was that these subjects were already dead, and their death did not first have to be procured. On February 9, 1942 Wolfram Sievers, chief executive of Himmler's *Ahnenerbe* institute, would ask if he might have some skulls of Jewish-Bolshevik commissars for his scientific research at the University of Strasbourg. Sievers drafted a letter for Brandt who forwarded it to a certain Eichmann with Himmler's signature duly appended, assuring him that everything necessary would be done to augment this skull collection.

Engaged routinely in matters like these, young Rudi Brandt gave Himmler the last darkening years of his short life. He signed many such letters, and future enemies would seize upon that – not appreciating that *i.V.* or *i.A.* after his signature and before Himmler's typed name meant no more than 'signed in the absence of.' Himmler's military adjutant Werner Grothmann would say that Brandt was just an endlessly hard-working cipher, careful not to develop any opinions of his own. Asked by Dr Leo Alexander, a skilled American interrogator, for his most lasting impressions of the war, Brandt ventured a stout answer: 'Lasting impressions? They were left by the murder of our airmen who crashed behind Russian lines, and by the [British] bombing of Dresden and other cities . . . It's much easier in retrospect to sit in judgment.'

Brandt had typed for Himmler for twelve years, and as punishment the Americans put him to death in Landsberg prison soon after.

ARRIVING IN BERLIN in July 1934 a few days after the Röhm Purge, Lina Heydrich moved into an apartment. She did not see her husband for some time; he was still camping out in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse.

He kept what had happened to himself. 'Later,' said Lina, writing privately in 1951, 'we hardly ever talked about these things. We were too much appalled' – in particular that anybody could have conspired as Röhm had against Adolf Hitler, 'the man in whom we saw everything that was good and worth living for.' 'How we did honour, love, and adore this man, A.H.,' she added, 'though most of us had yet to set eyes on him. . . It was Himmler who went to him, furnished with the reports by my husband.'

As for Himmler, the SA never forgave this young man for the bloodshed at Stadelheim and Lichterfelde. 'I brought up the Thirtieth of June 1934,' Himmler dictated, after seeing Alfred Rosenberg seven years later, 'and the fact that I had proposed Lutze as SA Chief of Staff, and my final disputes with Röhm, and the fact that the SA has not got over June 30, 1934 until this very day, but keeps on dragging it up, to stir up eternal unrest.' He still seemed surprised by that.

SOME OFFICERS OF THE SA SOON exacted a dramatic revenge. Three weeks after the Röhm purge a handful of Austrian SS men tried to hasten the process of *Anschluss,* union with Germany, by staging a coup in Vienna. The coup would be a fiasco, largely because the Austrian SA had decided to cut young Himmler down to size.

It happened like this. In the summer of 1933 many Austrian National Socialists had come over the frontier after their dictatorial chancellor Dr Engelbert Dollfuss declared the Party illegal. In Bavaria, many joined Himmler's SS. One, the policeman Fridolin Glass, set up a unit of army veterans, which Himmler integrated into his SS in the spring of 1934, as No. 89 *Standarte*. The Austrian Party leader Theo Habicht was living in exile in Munich; his deputy in Vienna was the attorney Dr Otto Gustav Wächter. For many months Glass hatched a plan for an SS coup. Wearing borrowed Austrian army uniforms, his 150 SS desperadoes would seize Vienna's radio station and arrest Chancellor Dollfuss. Much of the planning was conducted over cigars and liqueurs in the plush surroundings of Vienna's coffee houses.

One thing rankled. The plot allowed the Austrian SA only a subordinate role in Vienna, though a larger one in the provinces. On July 16, 1934 the Austrian SA commander, SA-*Obergruppenführer* Hermann Reschny, came in secret with Glass and the others to finalise details in Habicht's Munich apartment, at No. 60 Kunigundenstrasse. Reschny had escaped liquidation by Heydrich's SS hitmen two weeks earlier only by chance, and he was still licking his wounds. This was payback time. He made sure that two informants of the Austrian security authorities were furnished with all the details of the plot (so the later trial *in camera* of Hamburger *et al*. seemed to establish).

Confident of the support of the Austrian army and police, Hitler

mentioned these plans to Dr Goebbels over lunch on July 10. Visiting Bayreuth on Sunday the twenty-second, Hitler conferred with Habicht, General von Reichenau, and the former SA commander von Pfeffer. Goebbels was unconvinced. He wrote: 'Sunday: with the Führer. . . Austrian question. Will it come off? I'm very sceptical.'

The balloon went up three days later, on July 25, while Hitler was still at Bayreuth. Austrian SS men seized the radio station, and a dozen more stormed into the Vienna chancellery, with 'Major' Otto Planetta and Franz Holzweber, both in borrowed army uniforms, at their head. But somebody drew a pistol and opened fire; the chancellor Dr Engelbert Dollfuss was struck by two bullets. Chaos followed as the coup ringleaders including SS *Standartenführer* Otto Wächter found the chancellery doors locked. The sloppiness for which the Viennese are so famous, their *Wurschtigkeit*, supervened.

The Austrian SS men panicked. From Bayreuth, Hitler followed these Austrian noises-offstage as best he could. He reassured General Adam, his local army commander, that things were going well; but they were not. The phone lines from Vienna were dead – as indeed was Dollfuss, wounded and callously allowed to bleed to death. An appeal went to the SA to take to the streets as planned: Reschny, their commander, just smirked, and saw to it that in Vienna his men remained idle (in the provinces, under different leadership the SA performed better). SA *Brigadeführer* Oskar Türk circulated word to his troops that this coup was a private venture by Wächter and No. 89 *Standarte* of the SS, an operation for which the SA 'disclaimed all responsibility.'

THE FIASCO WAS A DISASTER for Himmler's prestige. Aghast at the damage to Germany's reputation, Hitler broke off his visit to Bayreuth, and disowned the plotters. He offered apologies to Vienna, recalled his ambassador, and sent an emissary, the arch-Catholic Franz von Papen. The SS adventure set back plans for *Anschluss* by years.

The records do not reveal how far Himmler himself had been initiated. His 1934 diary is as stated missing. He learned the hard way how brutally rival gangs sometimes settle scores. Austria sentenced to death a dozen of his men including Planetta and Holzweber –

by strangulation, as was the Austrian method. Later they were proclaimed martyrs, but that was small consolation at the time. After the *Anschluss* finally came, in March 1938, Heinrich Himmler set up a Historical Commission of criminologists including SS *Standartenführer* Dr Franz Stahlecker, to inquire into what had gone wrong. Himmler informed Heydrich of its terms of reference:

> This commission will be charged by me with determining calmly the circumstances of the ill-fated insurgency of July 25, 1934 in Austria, with gathering witness statements in evidence, and upon due consideration with identifying the guilty parties on both the National Socialist and the opposing side.

Heydrich took this as an instruction to expose the 'cover-up' performed by Austria's 'System Government' (the opaque term used for the *ancien régime*), and to wreak revenge on those who had executed Planetta and Holzweber and prosecuted the rest, despite promising them free exile. For a while the commission tried to have Dollfuss's body exhumed to retrieve the missing, and evidently fatal, second bullet. 'The calibre might prove,' they argued, 'that one of the bullets did not come from Planetta's pistol.'

'Perhaps later on,' offered Heydrich evasively. He foresaw problems – for instance, Himmler would have to guarantee immunity to whoever any second culprit turned out to be. The investigation lasted until October 1938, clarifying everything except the 'ticklish issue' of how many guns. To modern assassination-buffs it has a familiar ring.

AS FOR THE ILLEGAL AUSTRIAN SA, IT had not escaped Himmler's attention that SA-*Obergruppenführer* Hermann Reschny's men had effectively hung the SS men out to dry. Barely arrived from Stadelheim in his Valhalla, Ernst Röhm had taken his revenge. Himmler wanted to put these traitors, hotheads, and bunglers on trial in Munich before the Supreme Party Tribunal, the *Oberstes Parteigericht*, with both Wächter and Reschny in the dock, and with himself and Vienna's Gauleiter Josef Bürckel on the bench. Otto Wächter wrote to Himmler on May 3, 1938, stoutly refuting the SA allegations:

> If in line with the agreements reached in Munich [on July 16, 1934] the SA had risen as one man throughout Austria the very moment we seized the Chancellor's office, the operation would have succeeded even without the support of the *régime* forces.

He termed it 'the most shattering episode in his life' when the SA failed to put in their appearance.

Adolf Hitler stepped in, and ruled that it was time to move on. That being so, Himmler refused to order a full inquest into the SA's inaction. 'As you know,' he wrote to Wächter on June 9, 1938, 'the Führer has forbidden the whole inquiry into the July 1934 Rising, and the matter is accordingly closed.' On December 9, 1938 Himmler received the final report, with many photos and exhibits. The historical commission urged its publication. Heydrich had to refuse, 'given that the Führer has prohibited any further raking over of the domestic political events in Austria before March 1938.'

THE 1934 PARTY RALLY OPENED ON SEPTEMBER 5 in Nuremberg's Luitpold Hall. It was the now familiar 'gorgeous show' of flags and bands, and of orchestras and drama. The thirty thousand packing into the hall fell silent and the music stopped, and Hitler, followed by Himmler, Göring, Goebbels, and Hess appeared at the rear of the auditorium and strode at solemn pace down the centre aisle, to the podium where the Blood Flag awaited them. Himmler's exalted station in the new pecking order was now apparent. Gauleiter Adolf Wagner proclaimed in Hitler's name: 'There will be no revolution in Germany for the next one thousand years!'

A few days later, on September 9, Hitler spoke to fifty thousand of the SA Brownshirts for the first time since he had liquidated their leaders. He formally 'absolved' them from any complicity in Röhm's revolt. It was a brave move, but even so he had Sepp Dietrich's guards regiment drawn up between him and the seething stormtroopers.

WHEN IN BERLIN Himmler lived in a grace-and-favour apartment at No. 22 Hagenstrasse, in the fashionable Grunewald suburb; he signed letters from No. 8 Prinz-Albrechtstrasse in Berlin, the headquarters

of the Gestapo. The Party's treasurer Xaver Schwarz had purchased a building in Munich's Gabelsberger Strasse, No. 31, to house the national headquarters of the SS. It was around the corner from the Brown House. Himmler lived when in Munich in the bungalow in Waldtrudering, or in a stylish villa at No. 19, Möhlstrasse. Given notice in September that Heini would be moving out at the end of that month, the landlord replied expressing regret at the loss of such an 'agreeable tenant.'

A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE RÖHM PURGE he began to ponder moving into something more appropriate to his station. The Party put up part of the cash for him to buy a larger house. For a while he considered moving down the road from No. 109 to No. 129, Wasserburger Landstrasse; it was a larger one-family house, with five rooms, and a garage too. There is an unsigned five-year rental contract in his papers dated October 1934. But the Himmlers put the Waldtrudering bungalow on the market that month and moved out of Munich, to the south. He had purchased a white-walled three-storey villa, 'Lindenfycht', built in the 1880s in Bavarian peasant style, with wide overhanging eaves at Gmund, on the shores of Lake Tegernsee.

To raise the rest Himmler used Marga's dowry. It was she who took out the policy (monthly premium: 31 marks), insuring the property for 20,000 marks. She was on the deeds as joint owner, with her assets legally separate from his – '*Gütertrennung*,' which was unusual at that time, but proved fortunate in 1945.

He received no pay as Reichsführer, it must be added; even later, his only salary was that of a *Staatssekretär* in the ministry of the interior, plus that of a Member of the Reichstag. The house's previous owner was a concert singer, Alois Burgstaller, Heini's senior by thirty years. Burgstaller was a tenor, noted for his portrayal of Richard Wagner's Siegfried. He had provoked the ire of the composer's formidable wife Cosima by singing in the unlicensed première of *Parsifal* in New York city; she ruled that Burgstaller would never sing at Bayreuth again. The Himmlers stayed good friends with Burgstaller, as he lived nearby; Heini had bottles of best beer sent round to him. Lyndenficht at Gmund was now the Himmler family home for the rest of his life.

HERE HEINI LIVED THE LIFE of a popular local squire. There was an extensive flower garden with a greenhouse behind Lindenfycht. He seems to have moved in early in October 1934. An agency was asked to provide a housemaid to clean the rooms, do the laundry, and cook for five adults (including three staff) and the two children, Gudrun and foster-child Gerhard. Here in Gmund, Marga would for a time share a room with Gudrun, who was now five. On the ninth he hired a Munich architect Josef Heldmann to oversee repairs. The local waterways commission wrote granting him 'personal and revocable' permission to maintain the boathouse and to use a rowing boat on the lake – upon proper payment of annual dues. *Ordnung muß sein*: in many petty ways Germany was still a law-and-order state.

Over the years he expanded this little domain. In 1936 Rudi Brandt would establish an office in the local village for when the Reichsführer joined his family down here, as Himmler never brought more one or two adjutants and their typists with him. The house eventually had a dozen bedrooms and five bathrooms. There was a wide fireplace in the living room and broad windows overlooking the lake and Alps. The furniture was in good taste. There was a library. (Most of its books would end up in the Library of Congress in the United States.)

In 1939 Himmler added a local *Kriminalsekretär*, Johann Laur, to beef up security. Laur acted as janitor with his colleague *Kriminal-inspektor* Sebastian Hammerl; relieved of that post after a stomach operation in 1940, Laur took on lesser duties as gatekeeper. There was also a guest house, the Villa Erika, where Himmler's brother Gebhard stayed, or relatives of Marga like army captain Walter Boden, who came with his wife and three children. Among other visitors recalled by Laur were the personal physician of Heini's mother, Dr Karl Fahrenkamp, who became chief medical officer with his own biotechnical Research Unit at Dachau, and Heini's old friends from Apfeldorf, Dr Hugo Höfl and his wife Friedl.

The grounds were guarded by a small SS unit housed in a barracks, where Himmler occasionally received visitors too. As the coming war turned nasty, labourers excavated an air-raid shelter in the garden – it is still there. From this house Himmler's diaries, personal papers, letters to his family, and photo albums were profitably looted

by American troops and Red Cross girls billeted there in 1945. 'Looking around,' said the girls' captain, Esther Walker, 'you would say the Himmlers were quiet, home-loving people who liked things comfortable, but didn't believe in putting on airs.'

That was close to the truth. Himmler was a policeman, a rather special policeman, caught up in the larger toils of History. The photos show him at home in leather shorts and Bavarian hat, pictured with family and friends; they include occasionally Reinhard Heydrich, seen with him punting through the reeds on the lake.

For years after the war Marga's cactus collection still filled the east window of the living room, and a glass of botanical specimens hung from the wall; there were prints of flowers and plants scattered throughout the house. Heini's collection of fossils and petrified fern remained behind glass in a cabinet in his study, just as he had left it.

25: *Beyond the Horizon*

WITH THE SA LEADERSHIP eliminated, what next? Judea as an enemy did not yet bulk large above Himmler's horizon. He had excluded Jews from his elite SS as racially inferior, but he did not yet recognise the Jews as a noisy and virulent opponent of National Socialism.

He should have paid them more attention. Seen from the relative tranquillity of the Twenty-First Century, the Jews of Europe figure disproportionately on each side of the Twentieth's balance sheets of cruelty, both as perpetrators and their prey – as torturers and tortured, as murderers and victims. They had been comprehensively expelled for hundreds of years from many countries, including the most civilised. Although comprising barely four percent of Russia's population, Jews were at the forefront of Moscow's 1917 revolution. By the end of 1918, Jews filled 457 of the 556 top Bolshevik posts. Speaking to a Jewish audience in 2013, President Vladimir V Putin himself mischievously underlined that eighty-five percent of the first Soviet government were Jews.

Perhaps they seemed far away. Far beyond Germany's eastern horizon, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilych Lenin, himself of concealed Jewish origin, had fashioned this rootless, fanatical racial group into the most ruthless arm of his dictatorship. Jews had taken over leadership of the feared Cheka, the 'All-Russian Extraordinary

Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage,' ever since Lenin set it up by decree in December 1917. The Cheka and its unlovely successors, GPU and the NKVD, established outposts, largely officered by Jews, throughout the Soviet empire, a practice which would continue long after the coming war. Jews had notoriously provided the murderers who had cruelly ended the Romanov dynasty. One Jew signed the warrant, and handed it to another to execute; a Talmud student and Cheka agent carried out the actual killings, with two others. They shot, bayoneted, and bludgeoned to death the former Tsar, his wife, and their five children with their staff in the Urals city of Ekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk) one night in July 1918, then pillaged the bodies and attempted to burn them.

Published statistics showed that in 1934 Jews dominated Stalin's security apparatus; 38·5 percent of its senior officers were of Jewish origin. Often they had Germanic names, which they as often concealed – Kamenev was born Rosenfeld, etc. A historian, Sever Plocker, also a Jew, estimated that these Jews were responsible for *twenty million deaths*. While their fellow-travellers in the West turned a blind eye, Lenin and Stalin preferred to rely on Jewish interrogators, executioners, and judges, as Plocker found. Genrich (Heinrich) Yagoda, the founder of the NKVD, alone had ten million lives on his conscience. He was replaced in 1936 by Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, a five-foot-tall Gentile who had taken a Jewish wife, Yevgenia Feigenburg. Yezhov came to an unfortunate end. His accomplice Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich outdid even him, while Leonid Reichman, the NKVD's chief interrogator, would deservedly enter the annals of the Red Terror. All were Jews. 'Many Jews,' summarised Plocker angrily, 'sold their soul to the devil of the Communist revolution – and have blood on their hands for all eternity.'

NEITHER HIMMLER NOR HEYDRICH had yet taken account of this Jewish element of Bolshevik history. In Heydrich's papers, now partly housed in Moscow, we find that for five years after the National Socialists came to power, he ranked the Catholics, followed by Protestants and freemasons, as Germany's most dangerous enemies. Judea – *das internationale Judentum* – came only seventh.

This is surprising in the light of Himmler's earlier reading, the bloodstained history of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, and episodes like the murder of Rosa Luxemburg. But Himmler's attitude toward the Jewish race was still academic, one of detachment. In 1935 a former neighbour sent him a litany of complaints about the Party's local branch in Waldtrudering now that Himmler had moved away, but asked him to intercede for Heymann, a local Jew, whose non-Jewish mother was claiming to be related to the Reichsführer. 'Not much really I can do about it, if a distant relative forgets himself and marries a Jew,' responded Himmler, adopting a bantering tone, while not denying the details *per se*. 'I'm sorry for him [Heymann], same as I'm sorry for all mixed-race folks. But as a National Socialist I can't help him. That would be going against the tenets of our Movement and our nation.' He added: 'Incidentally you can just see how Jewish Heymann's thinking is: he hints in a roundabout way that I am a relative, so as to make it look like I've got the Heymanns' blood in me; while the God-awful truth is that Heymann has ours in him.'

It's hard not to imagine a grin as he dictated this to Rudi Brandt.

THERE WAS A PERCEPTIBLE UNDERCURRENT against the Jews in Germany which they had done little to earn or dispel. After the Great War they were wrongly seen as 'draft-dodgers'; in 1926 the left-wing editor of *Die Weltbühne* Kurt Tucholsky privately boasted, 'For three and a half years I dodged the war as much as I could.' In the following year, before emigrating to Sweden, he penned these malevolent words to his fellow-Germans: 'Let gas enter into the bedrooms of your children. . . I wish a general editor, a mother of a sculptor, a sister of a banker, a bitter and painful death.'

Himmler still turned an occasional Nelson-eye on a colleague's racial origins – like Philipp Katheder, Gebhard's regimental comrade from the Great War, and SS *Standartenführer* Dr Oskar Kauffmann, the *Gau* Chief Surgeon of Carinthia, whose great-grandfather had been a rabbi in Trieste. Himmler brought Kauffmann to Berlin 'although he was well aware of the background,' as one medical historian learned: perhaps Himmler needed an informant in the Reich Health Service; Kauffmann would have a marker which he could call in.

THE MID-THIRTIES WERE WRITTEN AGAINST a background of rising carnage, which historians overlook at their peril. Having dealt with the SA, Heinrich Himmler turned to the army. There were months of bickering between the Party, the SS, and the armed forces. Hitler summoned their leaders on January 3, 1935 and made a dramatic appeal to bury the hatchet somewhere other than in each other. 'After the Führer's speech,' wrote General von Fritsch, the army's commander-in-chief, in his private papers, 'the witch-hunt by the SS died down for a time.'

It was Heydrich who had instructed the murder squads on June 30, 1934. We still do not know how far Himmler sanctioned these operations. Opponents had begun to disappear. With the assistance of Göring's *Forschungsamt*, Heydrich and his experts kept watch on Catholics, monarchists, Communists, former labour union officials, and hostile intellectuals. Many enemies were operating from outside Germany. Heydrich mounted the targeted-killing operation against the pacifist Professor Theodor Lessing in Karlsbad in 1933; he tried to take out a student called Bell in Kufstein, and he organised the abduction of Bertold Jakob Salomon from Swiss territory on March 9, 1935 so that he could be charged with treason.

It was Heydrich who silenced Rudolf Formis too. Before 1933 Formis had directed the official broadcaster Süddeutscher Rundfunk from Stuttgart. Now an exile, Formis was operating 'Radio Black Front' from Czech territory on behalf of Otto Strasser, brother of the murdered Gregor Strasser. It was broadcasting annoying items about Göring and Himmler on the 31-metre waveband. He pretended to be inside Germany, but the *Forschungsamt* knew better: they radiolocated him near Prague. 'We stand here at our microphone,' rasped Formis in December 1934, 'and beside us are 600 pounds of dynamite. If the black dogs come,' by which he meant the SS, 'they will go up with us.'

Heydrich decided to smash the transmitter and snatch Formis, and handed the job to Alfred Naujocks of his *Sicherheitsdienst*. Franz Josef Huber briefed Naujocks that the FA had pinpointed the transmitter at the Hotel Záhoří, at Slapy nad Vltavou, south of Prague. Naujocks checked in there, obtained a wax impression of the Formis room key

and secretly took a photo of Formis, for Berlin to confirm his identity.

The next time he came to Prague he was accompanied by Edith Kersbach, a pretty gymnastics teacher. She flirted with Formis all evening – it was January 23, 1935 – then invited him upstairs to her room. The kidnapping was botched. Inside the room were Naujocks and a second SD hit-man, Werner Göttsch. Formis had time to draw his revolver and shoot the girl, before they shot him. The Gestapo men escaped. Berlin accused Otto Strasser of operating an illegal transmitter, and Prague put him away with a four-month jail term.

HIMMLER HIMSELF WAS IN THE CLEAR. Gebhard would say that these years were probably his brother's happiest. He drew on Germany's history, how their forefathers, for example, had sunk homosexuals into swamps: so his ancient tomes had taught him. Werner Best said Himmler acted like a schoolteacher, lecturing his men, correcting, punishing, and even prescribing them convalescent leave – a *Kur*.

He founded the *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage) Foundation, to poke his finger in the eye of academics who had scoffed at him. 'Above all,' recalled Rudi Brandt, 'he wanted to declare war on book learning.' Himmler saw in the *Ahnenerbe* an institution where oddballs could experiment – scientists who would never normally have prevailed. The foundation would support the more controversial branches of science, like cancer-cures and medicinal herbs (the work of Marga's cousin Dr Philipp von Luetzelburg, a recognised botanist). Himmler created a Research Unit at Dachau under Dr Karl Fahrenkamp, to research into seeds and digitalis. Fahrenkamp was a quarter-Jew, to whom the three Himmler brothers entrusted the treatment of their mother. Fahrenkamp now supervised Himmler's favourite project, a herb-garden, established in the Dachau camp. So said SS-*Sturmbannführer* Luitpold Schallermeier, Wolff's personal assistant, who helped him the secret *Ahnenerbe* funds. It seems that Wolff used Special Account 'R' to finance projects of his own. He could not explain the endorsement 'secret payment to SS-*Obergruppenführer* Wolff' on one 500-mark payment by Special Account 'R'. Paul Baumert said that SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Christian Mohr was the only man who could pay money out of the account, and Wolff had to countersign.

There was little oversight. The research done by the *Ahnenerbe* was later clouded by some of its more questionable, even criminal, wartime sidelines. Himmler ordered support given to a biology postgraduate, von der Goltz, whose professor lectured on eugenics. When Goltz postulated that bastards were blessed with less valuable genetic traits than legitimate offspring, Himmler dropped him. The controversial Lebensborn e.V., which providing support for single mothers, was funded by *Ahnenerbe*. Himmler willingly backed this, and in September 1939 he would order the profits of Wienerwald Casino in Austria wholly diverted to Lebensborn. It harked back to Himmler's adolescent 'White Knight years,' his chivalrous concern for the plight of the beerhall barmaid and the prostitute, shown by his earlier diaries. As Rudi Brandt stated: 'Himmler wanted to remove the difficulties facing the unwed mother. . . That's why he set up this thing. It wasn't to promote illegitimate childbirths.'

Karl Wolff stated under interrogation: 'The *Ahnenerbe* was originally an idealistic foundation. Somebody like [SS-*Sturmbannführer* Dr Walther] Wüst is the guarantor of that.' Himmler showed his Circle of Friends over Dachau, and himself delivered the lecture: 'Look, those are Jehovah's Witnesses, those are recidivist reoffenders, those are political criminals. You have my permission to speak with anybody. You can go into any hut, and speak with any person you want. You have my word for it.' That was in 1937. In return, the members might ask for small favours – August Rosterg was pardoned, and permitted to emigrate to Switzerland when the war began to go wrong; Himmler advised him to keep a still tongue while there. Other members of the Circle were given privileged access to forced labour; Oswald Pohl arranged that. The Circle numbered a score or more men, in their sixties mostly. Changing the subject, Wolff continued, 'Special Account "R" was the special account available to Himmler if he wanted to pay a veteran's debts, or give money to [Gregor] Strasser's widow. That's how he helped many people.'

THE CONCEPT OF CHIVALRY was still deeply rooted in Himmler. It wound as a constant thread through his early reading. He conceived of his SS as an 'Order', imbued with the qualities he believed he would

find in all the Nordic races and the age of the Teutonic knights.

The SS man had to be '*gottgläubig*' – religious, but not worshipping any particular God. He had to display loyalty to his Führer, while preserving the SS code of honour and respecting property. Woe betide the SS man who welched on a debt. Insolvency was in Himmler's eyes a crime. 'You ran up a bar-tab in the Hofbräu beerhall in Würzburg,' Himmler reprimanded one SS officer in February 1935, 'and left the city without settling up. . . You've been bragging to comrades about your private gun collection, and grossly exaggerating its value. By this behaviour you have damaged your standing and dignity as an SS officer.' He placed the man on unpaid leave, and gave him six weeks to swear before the SS Court that he was now clear of indebtedness.

He pumped eighty thousand marks into Count von Helldorff, addicted to gambling, in a vain attempt to clear him of debt.

Himmler's concept of *Treue*, loyalty, was romantic: he appointed Max von Schenkendorf's Nineteenth Century hymn – with the words, '*Wenn alle untreu werden, so bleiben wir doch treu*' – as the '*Treuelied der SS*,' its 'hymn of loyalty.' Its inspiring lines would ring out at all the SS ceremonies: 'Let all others become unfaithful, we shall keep the faith.' Eventually he had heavy rings cast in solid silver, and at the annual November oath-taking ceremony he formally bestowed SS daggers on each new officer with the solemn imprecation: 'Draw it never without need, sheath it never without honour.'

With funds from the Special Account, he set up a porcelain manufacturer, Allach, which in October 1937 would move into premises just outside the Dachau camp, and benefit from its manpower. Allach promised Himmler eight thousand copies of the 'Yule candlestick' in time for Yuletide that year – the winter solstice on December 21. Made of red earthenware, this *Jul-Leuchter* had all the delicacy for which the Nordic cave-dweller was renowned – a chunky four-sided tower, hollowed out of clay, and embellished on each side with the Hagal-rune (a starburst) topped by a heart. Much of the mythology surrounding the *Jul-Leuchter* was just that, a myth, but until 1945 he directed that this unsightly artefact be presented to each long-serving married SS man. With it, his bride was expected to embellish a shrine to be set up in one corner of their home.

Hitler indulged Himmler; his methods were producing an elite of tall young men who provided good-looking sentries on his Chancellery and impressive honour-guards at Tempelhof. But in private, like Göring, he sniffed at Himmler's foibles. At Christmas 1940, Hitler would visit Sepp Dietrich's *Leibstandarte* regiment in France with Himmler, and witnessed his first pagan Yuletide ceremony.

Hitler commented drily that he didn't see it replacing 'Silent Night.'

HIMMLER TRAVELLED ENDLESSLY, VISITING ANCIENT castles and monasteries. He rather mocked himself for pursuing this hobby, but he had an inner purpose of his own. Himmler was founding his own SS 'Order' to turn back the clock. After 1200 the original Teutonic knights had built a *Stammburg* for their 'Order' in Marienburg in West Prussia, whence these crusaders had sallied forth to colonise the Baltic coast, until a newly rising Poland and Lithuania defeated them in battle at Tannenberg on July 15, 1410. He would need a castle – soothsayers had suggested Westphalia where a great onslaught from the east would be brought to a halt on the Westphalian *Hellweg*, the mediæval east–west highway, near Soest.

He had spent time and treasure visiting these mediæval monuments as a guest of the splendidly named Friedrich Adolf Karl August Roderich, Baron von Oeynhausen of Grevenburg. Himmler gave the baron an honorary SS rank, and fell in with Hermann Bartels, the province's chief architect (*Landesbaumeister*) and the baron's special adviser on conservation and restoration. Bartels had restored the castles of Beverungen and Ramsdorf in Westphalia.

The Reichsführer fastened his interest on the Wewelsburg, built by the prince-bishops near Paderborn in the early 1600s, as his *Stammburg*. He first visited it in 1933, and formally leased it for the SS on September 22, 1934 paying a symbolic annual rent of one mark. Rising out of the mists of ages, mediæval sagas of ancient 'Orders' – of Heinrich the Fowler, of Teutonic crusaders, indeed of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table – welled up in his imagination. Baron von Oeynhausen proposed Bartels, now an SS *Standartenführer*, as the supervising architect. Himmler's 1935 diary records nine more visits to the castle, and reconstruction of the ruined

North Tower began. Under SS *Obergruppenführer* Siegfried Taubert, a wiry officer with a chronic stomach ailment, he established here a Reichsführer School. On the eastern side were four prison camps, from which Bartels drew the necessary labour – 'conscientious objectors and,' as the British later adjudged, 'sadists and criminals.' About 250 Bible Students (*Bibelforscher*) languished at Wewelsburg.

Construction proceeded throughout the war. In 1945 the forty remaining Bible Students, having evidently benefited morally but little from their studies, looted the castle and set it on fire.

OVER THE PREWAR YEARS HIMMLER'S PLANS for the Wewelsburg grew. Bartels was charged to design an inner sanctum for the SS 'Order' in which only a select few would be allowed to set foot. Steeped by then in the SD's investigations into Europe's masonic lodges, Karl Wolff recalled with a disrespectful chuckle that the Wewelsburg was to become the High Temple of the new 'Order', with the illustrious person of the Reichsführer himself officiating as Grand Wizard and Lord High Master (*Hoch- und Großmeister*). As the work progressed over the last four years of Himmler's life, remembered Rudi Brandt, he converted the Wewelsburg into an exclusive sanctum in which all the SS *Obergruppenführer* should assemble once or twice a year to hear him speak, and then retire to their devotions. A chamber was set aside as the supreme court of the SS in which Himmler's generals – men beyond the reach of mortal courts – could be arraigned. On the ground floor of the thick-walled North Tower was the '*Obergruppenführer* Hall'; in the polished grey marble floor was set a mystic sun-wheel executed in dark green mosaic, known as the Black Sun. The Hall was never used, as the work gave way to Total War in 1943.

Himmler eventually lavished around eleven million marks on restoring the castle, said Wolff. The money was partly borrowed from the Dresdner Bank, with the rest put up by the Circle of Friends. In their own mysterious way, and absent what is called 'due diligence,' the bank and friends regarded the Wewelsburg as a useful investment. The money went on costly carpets, tapestries, and paintings. A letter dated September 28, 1942 to Bartels from an SS *Obersturmführer* reported that a large collection of antique furniture and china had

been purchased in Holland and was available for Bartels to inspect; he selected items worth 206,000 marks for the castle. Bartels became curator of the resulting collection, as Prinz-Albrechtstrasse shipped crates of artworks to safety from 1942 to 1944.

THE WEWELSBURG WOULD REMAIN A HIMMLER work-in-progress, overstuffed with furniture, art, and unopened packing-crates. There were paintings by De Jong, H Kaufmann ('Blücher and a Prussian gun team'), and others of the Dutch school. There was an oil painting of the warrior Albrecht von Wallenstein drinking, surrounded by men playing cards and women fingering *objets d'art*, and others of a hunting Party, and an Alpine scene by Philips Wouwerman (with a label incongruously pricing it in red ink at '250 guineas'.)

Karl Wolff looked back on his master's Wewelsburg project with sarcasm tinged with envy and nostalgia. In one chamber, he said, would be a silver urn holding the SS-rings of all the fallen SS officers. When a *Gruppenführer* died, funeral obsequies were to be spoken in the gloomiest chamber seven floors down in the North Tower. The chamber was shrouded in darkness, with only a dim light creeping in. In a conscious attempt to create a tradition, the coat-of-arms of each SS general would be displayed here; it would be immolated in this chamber, burned to ashes, and a stone slab embossed with those arms would be borne forth into the Hall in solemn procession.

So said *Gruppenführer* Wolff, the former advertising executive, who seemingly looked forward to his own eventual immortality. Wolff wrote to all the top SS generals in April 1939 inquiring if they already had coats-of-arms available. 'The Reichsführer expressed the wish,' he testified later, 'to be buried in this mysterious deepest chamber of the North Tower.' Millions still had to die before that time came.

THIS HARMLESS ECCENTRICITY IN HIMMLER WAS paralleled by a superstitiousness, a belief in astrological 'revelations,' and the power of ancestral memory, or '*Erberinnern*.' Modern women might have their 'bad hair' days, but Werner Best observed that there were certain times when Himmler withdrew, and carefully abstained from doing anything, as these were his scientifically predicted 'bad luck' days.

The arch-priest who encouraged this aberration for a while, Himmler's personal Rasputin, was Karl Maria Wiligut. A one-time colonel in the Austro-Hungarian army and thirty-three years older than Himmler, Wiligut represented himself as an expert in Nordic runes. He spoke in tongues, the kind of superstitious babble which usually excites only ladies born under a Sign of the Zodiac. We could ignore Wiligut were it not that Himmler swore by him; the name figures in the surviving 1935 diary three times. It does seem odd that Himmler gave Wiligut the attention that he did. He promoted Wiligut to *Brigadeführer*, and swore by him for six years. Wiligut had taken the Nordic name of 'Weisthor,' and Himmler even had him conduct a pagan name-giving ceremony on January 4, 1937, for Karl Wolff's first son, who would go forth into life blessed with the name of 'Thorisman,' with Weisthor/Wiligut inscribed as his Godfather.

Weisthor was a prankster. He could be hospitable, offering guests cigarettes, but always including an exploding cigarette for the uninitiated. Two photos graced his piano in 1937 – from Himmler, 'For dear Colonel Weisthor, friend and teacher,' and from Wolff, 'To my paternal friend.' Strolling with his Finnish friend Yrjö von Grönhagen, Weisthor picked a pebble and pronounced that it dated from the time of the Goths; it was long and pierced near the end, and he declared it was the head of a bird and at least a thousand years old. When Professor Alexander Langsdorff, the archeologist, came he was roundly dismissed as a charlatan. Invited into Weisthor's bedroom to see a collection of pebbles, Langsdorff murmured 'Um,' repeatedly.

Letters from mystics and soothsayers poured in to Himmler's office. He passed them to Weisthor to reply. Weisthor paid these people's expenses to come to see him at his SS apartment in Grunewald – No. 33 Caspar-Theiss Street (an address which we shall meet again). One Sunday it was a fat forty-year old teacher, Miss Melchior, a 'clairvoyant.' She had lost her job as she did not believe in what books said; she began teaching about her 'visions' instead. Parents had complained; she described going to the SS in Cologne and finding two lovely young men there, and offering herself to them: 'Take me.' 'What was bad in that? I ask you.' The young men had laughed at her. Wiligut promised an investigation.

The nonsense continued until November 1938, when Karl Wolff happened upon Wiligut's estranged wife, and learned that Austria had sectioned him fourteen years earlier; diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and megalomania, he had been detained for three years in a Salzburg asylum. Those are the shifting sands on which many a religion has been founded, but Himmler scratched *Brigadeführer* Wiligut off his birthday list nonetheless. Wiligut's SS identity card and Death's Head ring were forfeited and put in Himmler's safe, with the autographed dagger – so Wolff informed the chief of SS personnel on August 22, 1939 – and Wiligut was forcibly retired from the SS a few days later, as being of unsound mind; by that date Heinrich Himmler had more immediate concerns on his plate.

WE FOUND HIMMLER'S POCKET-DIARY FOR 1935 in private hands in North America. It closely chronicled his movements and meetings. It has echoes of his earliest diaries – 'January 9: afternoon, dictated letters' – and 106 days are left blank. Like all diaries, this one invites statistical analysis. There were five mentions of Marga, or 'Mami' as he now called her; and none at all of Gudrun (or any other female names except 'Charlie,' Darré's wife: she boasted later of 'how many of Himmler's ideas actually came from her husband.')

Of the 259 days with entries, Himmler spent sixty-seven in his new lakeside villa in Gmund and 108 in the less enticing office in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, Berlin. Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess and his lieutenant Martin Bormann occasionally came over to see him in Gmund. Heini stayed in touch with both his parents. He visited them often when he was in Munich, and exchanged letters and postcards even as his work load increased. In 1935 his letters to his father were mostly dictated and typed, while his father's wise replies were penned in a hand that betrayed no sign of his advancing age.

Now approaching the end of his life, the old man passed on requests to Heinrich, his middle son. From Austria, the National Socialists were fleeing into exile in Hitler's Germany. Old Gebhard Himmler listened to their stories, and his son did what he could, arranging a job for an Austrian doctor for example in a German pædiatric hospital. Himmler replied to his father on November 30, 1934: 'I will help his

son Erich Neusser at any rate.' His own cousin Fritz Hofreiter had been dismissed as mayor of Marbach in Lower Austria and he too channelled requests to Himmler from young Austrians who had fled through the Kufstein border post.

The 1935 diary records that he was off sick for ten days after attending the SS ski championships in Garmisch in January. He worried too about 'Wölfchen,' when he fell briefly ill. He played tennis, and hunted deer and fowl. He took regular revolver lessons. He visited a spa, and for a week in May he booked a daily head-massage. With customary attention to detail he recorded his physical details. On December 28, 1934 he recorded his weight dressed at 175 *Pfund* (193 pounds); on May 21, evidently undressed, at 163 *Pfund* (179·3 pounds), and on October 14 and December 16 in Tegernsee at 153 Pfd. (168·3 pounds). His height measured 'in the evening, without shoes' was 174½ centimetres (five feet nine inches).

Snapshots in Himmler's album show him on the running track in 1935: his chest is hollow, his face gaunt. Discussing Himmler's character, an SS colonel would later concede: 'Another point which I found in the man's favour was that when he had issued the order that every SS man had to take the Sports Badge although he himself was, and is, completely out of training – you can see that – he also took the tests. He took part in the march with full pack at the SS military academy at Bad Tölz.' The files confirm that Heinrich Himmler completed the physically demanding four-hour march with full kit over fifteen miles on August 24, 1935, and then tackled the other tests as well. 'He took his place among the "Junkers",' recalled the colonel, 'and tackled the long jump, and when he couldn't make the grade, he trained hard until he made it.'

Only once did they bend the rules. On August 28, 1935 he put the thirty-pound shot over 9·34 metres, but in two stages – 4·93 plus 4·41 metres). A year later on July 21, 1936, he ran a hundred metres in 13·3 seconds. Thus he earned the SS Sports Badge in silver, dated August 17, 1936, and signed the formal statement: 'I herewith declare that I am of Aryan birth.' Heydrich of course was super-fit. In September 1937 and again the following February we find him refusing any promotion to officers who had yet to qualify for the sports badge.

SOMETIMES HIMMLER PATRONISED the theatre – to see politically charged plays like *Thomas Paine*, about the United States' forgotten founding father, or movies like Hans Steinhoff's *Der alte und der junge König* (The Old and the Young King) starring Emil Jannings as Friedrich Wilhelm I. He even took in the movie version of Joan of Arc in *Das Mädchen Johanna* (Maid Joan), portrayed as a woman of humble background whose belief in victory enabled her to restore France's pride and generate a national rebirth: the parallel was obvious.

These were times of peace. Leaving security operations to Heydrich, Himmler allowed himself extended vacations. Two or three times he stayed with his louche cousins the Höfls at Apfeldorf in Bavaria. He attended six weddings that year – the gaudy nuptials of Göring, the staider ones of Arthur Greiser, his clerk-stenographer Rudi Brandt, and the killers Hans-Adolf Prützmann and Heinrich Müller – all would die uncomfortable deaths; and of Liesl, a waitress from the Munich Osteria; he stayed away from the wedding on May 11 of Emil Maurice, revealed as a half-Jew. But mere Jewishness was still no bar for Himmler; as the diary of Göring's bustling deputy Erhard Milch, shows, they had also struck a close friendship, and Milch and Himmler regularly exchanged birthday greetings.

The diary mentions Hitler only seventeen times that year; he drove back to Berlin 'with the Führer' from Garmisch. It glimpses Himmler visiting industrialist Friedrich Flick, a benefactor of his Circle of Friends, and four visits to war minister Werner von Blomberg.

As for Hermann Göring, Himmler still habitually misspelt his name; Himmler returned to Berlin both for the general's birthday and the extravagant wedding to Emmy Sonnemann (who had divorced a Jew) and five other meetings, one of which he flagged as having been 'in private.' They were getting the measure of each other. In 1935 Göring confidentially summed up Himmler in his own handwritten almanac: 'HIMMLER: Chief of Police. Very energetic. Eminently suitable for whatever job. Organisation man. Many of his hobby-horses are pretty quirky.'

26: *Pillars of Stone*

ON MARCH 8, 1935 HIMMLER'S DIARY records hat he visited the windswept site of the *Externsteine* in the Teutoburg Forest. He was fascinated by these five towering sandstone pillars, not far from Detmold in Lippe. Himmler – of course – began to explore the site. Surmounting the tallest pillar, some 120 feet above ground, was a hollow chamber. Other rocks had carvings, and one chamber had a round hole above what could be an altar-slab; at the summer solstice the hole aligned exactly with the rising sun – it would have done so even more precisely, so pious professors would calculate, around the time of Jesus. Had an ancient tribe once worshipped here? Generations of scholars used the stones to bolster their own beliefs.

Heinrich Himmler would be drawn to the site year after year, in his ankle-length coat and floppy fedora, poking around and asking questions of the experts accompanying him. And why not? It was still peacetime, and he was enthralled by these tantalising traces left by ancient Germans – tangible, yet baffling too.

OCCASIONALLY IN 1935 he addressed Blomberg's Reichswehr officers on police matters. Their relationship was ambivalent, it seems, because when the war minister's career came to its calamitous end in 1938, his staff found a wire jamming the door of his safe and it was

traced beneath the floor-boards, eventually to Gestapo headquarters.

FOR HIS FUTURE OFFICER ELITE in the SS he had raided the German Navy, and particularly that select naval body, paymasters. Writing to him in May 1933 from the battleship *Schlesien*, Himmler's agent had promised: 'I will shortly be providing to you names which will more than meet your needs.' He drew attention to one senior naval paymaster, Oswald Pohl, who had joined the Party in 1925. 'He has jumped at it, Herr Reichsführer, and will try to present himself to you during your stay in Kiel.' He added: 'Lieutenant-Commander Canaris and I particularly regret that you are not embarked in the *Schlesien*, but we still hope to greet you here in Kiel one day.'

Himmler met Pohl in Kiel on May 22. Eight years older, Pohl complained that the navy did not provide enough intellectual satisfaction. He liked to work to exhaustion, and if Himmler humoured his application, wwhe would willingly risk having an uncertain future in the SS over an unfulfilling but secure job in the navy. He got the job. Pohl left the navy and took over an SA regiment in Kiel. Himmler appointed him an *Oberführer* and left it to Karl Wolff to brief him on his duties.

From April 20, 1939 onwards Pohl would head the *Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* (WVHA) of the SS, in fact the WVHA became a coven of paymasters. This office controlled the prison camps – their victualling and management, but not, it must be said, who was sent there, or what became of them. It was Pohl whose skills would enable the SS legions to get better gear than the other armed services, because with the cheap labour from the camps he could manufacture better equipment than the traditional suppliers. Few denied that he was the best brain that Himmler hired; but that quality would not spare him, despite years of delay, from an American gibbet in the end.

ON JANUARY 14, 1935 HIMMLER RECORDED IN HIS diary a 'visit from [Wilhelm] Canaris.' Hitler had appointed the soft-spoken navy captain, Heydrich's neighbour in Berlin-Schlachtensee, as his chief of Intelligence (*Abwehr*) two weeks earlier; Canaris came at least four

times in 1935, including once with Heydrich, for an evening with the Himmlers. It was the beginning of an odd friendship which was to prove something of a puzzle in 1944.

Canaris was thirteen years Himmler's senior and had travelled far. He drank pink champagne for breakfast, and there was something about his old and mildewed uniform that smacked of distant seas. In the world war his cruiser *Dresden* had seen action at Coronel and the Falkland isles, and she was scuttled in the Pacific; Caanaris escaped from captivity disguised as a priest, surviving many Hornblowerish adventures. His snow-white hair lent him a venerable air. He spoke English and Spanish as well as German. His tiny handwriting used two different styles of 'H' when writing to 'Herr Himmler,' and two different ways to write the month in the same sentence – all of which might speak of an untidy, Bohemian mind. His pedigree was obscure, but he preferred it like that. Himmler turned a deaf ear on all questions about his competence; he fell for the older man's charms. When Karl Wolff brought up his name, the mild-mannered defence minister Blomberg snapped: 'Oh, keep that Levantine weirdo out of it. I'd never have any use for him unless we had to bump off somebody.' Canaris too would come to an unfortunate end.

Were it not for the avuncular protection of Himmler and Wilhelm Keitel, who became chief of the OKW, the German High Command, Canaris would have been axed long before. His complaisant agents were frequently 'turned' by their target country. Many saw the *Abwehr* as a milch cow created to sustain them in comfortable style. One *Abwehr* traitor being debriefed by British counterintelligence in 1943 would describe him thus: 'Friendly, ice-cold brain, knows his subordinates intimately and addresses them as *Du*. Domesticated, and entertains in Berlin – but not Party officials.' What this agent did not know, he invented in the best *Abwehr* tradition: 'He is on bad terms with Himmler and Ribbentrop, and on no terms with Göring. . . Canaris has no known vices and shows no preference [to] naval officers in matters of promotion. He despises the Party.' He had a stock of costly Carlos Primero Gran Reserva brandy which General Franco later sent him. Like Himmler, Canaris had little interest in enriching himself; so both men would die poor.

Canaris had begun asking favours of Himmler as early as 1933: 'I kept turning that E. affair over in my mind, after I wrote you about him,' Canaris had scribbled to him that summer. 'I realised that there was no way of knowing if I'd done the right thing in passing E.'s request on to you. Now I'm glad you had that talk with him. . . It'd be nice if we could have a chat about that and other things,' he concluded, and asked Himmler to say hello to Ernst Röhm from him. It was an oily kind of letter, but oily was how Canaris was.

REINHARD HEYDRICH WAS even closer to this new *Abwehr* chief, whom he had known since Canaris commanded the cruiser *Schlesien*. Their paths had kept crossing since then. One Sunday in Berlin in 1933 he and Lina had bumped into him and his wife Erika out walking their two dachshunds, and found that they were neighbours. Frau Canaris had sold her Ferdinand Gagliano violin to build the little villa in Schlachtensee where they moved in 1934, followed by the Heydrichs.

Living just two doors apart, they became inseparable, the immaculate Heydrich and the shabby naval officer. 'It was like fate!' wrote Lina. 'We used to see each other at our birthday parties, the two men went off hunting together.' They spent many evenings together for dinner, which Canaris cooked himself. Perhaps Canaris only pretended to like music. After Helmut Maurer, their other neighbour, an accomplished pianist, played Bach one evening Canaris waved his whisky at him and complained, 'Wow, all those clattering ivories! Deadly boring.'

The ill-judged friendship would continue until 1942, when Heydrich met his end. Canaris had painted the *Dresden* in oils. The painting hung on Heydrich's wall, and the Canaris couple were Lina's last guests at the Heydrich household in Jungfern-Breschan (Panenské Břežany) twelve miles from Prague. The times had changed by then. Heydrich's son Heider told us that just before his father's death the two families held a soirée in Berlin at which his father played the violin and Canaris the piano.

HIMMLER TENDED HIS RELATIONS with General Göring. On the last day of 1935 he wrote thanking him for his Christmas greetings, and

returning good wishes for the coming year, which he anticipated would be 'a year of struggle more than all those before.' 'I particularly thank you for sending me the print of your two war stories. In my brief Christmas vacation, which consists of working through my old mail, I will gladly read your narratives. . .'

That Christmas a present came from the Führer, a Glashütte pocket-watch worked in solid Gold with an inscription 'IN CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP.' It kept good time (it still does). Himmler had once given the Führer a painting of Frederick the Great, by the painter Adolph von Menzel, which hung in Hitler's study in the Führerbau. Hitler said there was nothing he would not do for Germany; Himmler knew there was nothing he would not do for Hitler, even unasked.

AS HE CULTIVATED HIS MANIFOLD CAREERS, Heini had rather pushed his ageing parents aside. He sent a large birthday bouquet to his mother in Munich that January 1935, and a greetings telegram as well. 'You'll come and visit us one evening when you're back,' she pleaded: 'Won't you, eh, Heini?' 'We're so pleased that you saw Ernst,' she jotted in a postscript, referring to his younger brother.

Heini had visited his father down there, now a *Geheimrat* (privy counsellor), for his seventieth birthday, May 17, 1935, and received a slightly mournful letter from him a few days later: 'Dear Heinrich,' his father had written, 'now that my seventieth year, with all the post-traumatic stress – the flood of letters and good wishes – has been successfully overcome I was just thinking how specially glad I am that you did not let your old dad down, and that you have given him so much pleasure.'

It was the kind of affectionate letter any proud father might write to his son. He had begun unconsciously tidying up loose ends in the way that old folk do as they see the stop-lights ahead turn from green to amber. The father had even visited his own aged mother-in-law to dig up genealogical points for Heini. He had ordered a copy of a book of scurrilous Austrian caricatures of Hitler, for Heini to pick up at Whitsun, knowing how much the Führer enjoyed such *lèse-majesté*. 'I'd really like to have heard from you,' he continued, changing the subject, 'about what has happened about that horrible anonymous

letter I got. It plopped like a bitter poison-draught into my beaker of birthday happiness, and has rather rattled me.' 'You're not to get upset about that anonymous letter,' dictated Himmler. 'You'll be hearing charming compliments like that every now and then, but not often. I'm sorry you even read the letter, as you take these things much more seriously than I.'

He was aware that he was now accumulating enemies.

As it turned out he was too busy to see his parents that Whitsun. He flew to Bavaria from Breslau, but slept all weekend. 'I worked yesterday and today,' he apologised to his father in mid June, 'and rested up a bit but didn't really want to drive into Munich.' His father wrote once more that August, in careful copperplate handwriting sprinkled with Latin tags (and what a wonderful old man he must have been) and a lot of genealogy. Thanking Heini for sending over a sheaf of family papers, he offered more gossip on family history – 'among the scrappy notes I once made on my dear †Mother's utterances, I have found this: "†Father was also related to a Hattinger family."'

He corrected the minor errors he had discovered in his ancestors' birth dates, and told Heini they had both been laid up with colds: 'We'll be so happy to see you again before you go away. Please arrange to have a meal with us, and tell us in good time, eh?' He passed on *valde nolenti* ('very unwillingly') several pleas including a new one from Dr Neusser, and he asked Heini to visit Lieutenant-Colonel Julius Görlitz at the new National Party School in Feldafing on Lake Starnberg, and to call on Heini's old teacher Karl Hudezeck, who had succeeded him as principal of the Wittelsbach school. 'And one more question,' added his father. 'Have you been able to give the Führer the Austrian book of caricatures, and has anything come of it?'

Heinrich endorsed the letter, 'HH,' and dictated to Rudi Brandt a typescript reply, asking his father to expand the chart on the Heyders (his maternal line) still more. 'I am looking into the Dr Neusser thing,' he assured his dad; he hoped to be able to visit Feldafing 'this year, some time.' Finally, 'the author of the Austrian book of caricatures will be getting a signed photo of the Führer. The Führer was delighted with it. I was present while he looked through it.'

IT IS NOT HARD to guess what underlay the poison pen letter to Heini, the policeman. It was not a good time to be a habitual criminal in Germany, or anti-Hitler; there were no more cracks to slither through. Observing things from a loftier horizon, History might murmur that, if anything, the Reich was shifting toward *state organised* criminality. Germany was making enemies, and they vanished into *Schutzhaft* – imprisoned without trial in a *Konzentrationslager*.

Citing that *Notverordnung*, the Emergency Law passed the day after the Reichstag fire, Himmler acted often without due process of the courts. Later, he would arrogate to himself an arbitrary power over life and death, ordering executions without consulting Hitler. 'I must admit,' he bragged in 1944 to army generals, 'I have committed many such illegal acts in my time. But rest assured: I have resorted to these acts only when I felt that sound common sense and the innate justice of a Germanic and right-thinking people were on my side.' He placed Theodor Eicke, the killer of Röhm, in charge of the KZ system, in recognition of his organisational achievements in Dachau. Eicke took over the new Concentration Camps Inspectorate. The smaller camps Eicke shut down, and built larger: economies of scale.

They were still intended to be correctional establishments, as evidenced by the motto on their gates: ARBEIT MACHT FREI – 'Work Sets Free,' but the guards were also authorised to shoot prisoners trying to escape. Gürtner, minister of justice, voiced concerns about this to Himmler on October 16, 1935. Himmler silenced him, claiming to have submitted Gürtner's views to the Führer on November 1. 'Given the most conscientious management of the concentration camps,' he wrote, 'special measures are not deemed to be necessary.' As a lawyer, Gürtner will have noticed that Himmler was careful not to say that he had Hitler's actual approval.

HIMMLER'S SS WAS NOW A STAR ATTRACTION in Germany. Young men made it their career preference. On April 5, 1935, he invited his brother Gebhard and their parents to Gmund for lunch with Oswald Pohl, and together they watched Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. The Party staged its next Nuremberg Rally, the seventh, from September 10–16, 1935. Himmler authorised his department heads

to bring their wives, and his parents came to witness this spectacle in the flesh. He thanked his father for coming. 'No doubt it was somewhat exhausting,' he agreed. 'I am particularly glad that you as my father have witnessed it all this once.' His father had jogged his memory about another plea, a man named 'Schindler,' and Himmler promised to look into it, but such promises now had an automatic, even empty ring.

An annual routine had begun, commemorating the failed Munich putsch of 1923. His diary shows that on November 8, 1935 he held a conference of all his SS generals, followed on the ninth by the midnight ceremony, a passing-out parade outside Munich's Feldherrnhalle. Here at midnight the SS officer-candidates, standing rock-still beneath the scowl of the lions on the plinth, swore allegiance to Hitler before receiving their ceremonial dagger and being accepted into the SS ranks.

Heini had invited his parents to this parade as his guests too, and back at his desk in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse in Berlin he received a letter from them saying how much it had inspired them.

Did the young Reichsführer, still only thirty-five, glow when he read such effusions of parental pride? We can no longer know.

27: *'Judea Declares War'*

RIVERS DON'T FLOW IN STRAIGHT LINES, nor does History. Completely unnoticed, Britain in 1936 began work on the most efficient mass-killing war machine, the magnificent Lancaster bomber, but six years would pass before Europe trembled to the tread of its four Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. In retrospect too, we can only now detect how the shifting sea of events began to coil around Europe's largely unwanted Jews – but only slowly; and deep, deep down.

In defeat, the records of Reinhard Heydrich's security service, by then called the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, would be removed to Moscow. They yield an unexpected picture: Himmler and the RSHA operated at arm's length from each other. Heydrich was the driving force, and he kept tight control. Information from below went upwards to him and his department heads; their instructions and decisions flowed downwards. Himmler rarely saw these files – because if he did we would see proof; he would have scratched his *Sichtvermerk,* his ubiquitous initials, 'HH', on them. 'The *Gruppenführer*,' meaning Heydrich, 'has directed that only such of the key events of the last quarter as are suitable for the Reichsführer's information on the success of our work are to be submitted to him' – so Heydrich's chief aide ordered in August 1937. He added that the reports were initially to be sent up to himself, and 'in pristine condition.'

GERMANY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY STILL BARELY FIGURED ON Himmler's horizon. He had hobbies to pursue. Although he several times inspected his *Standarten* in their cities, even the expanding SS no longer monopolised his attention. Himmler allowed himself ever lengthier vacations and visits to historic sites in Bavaria, Pomerania, and West Prussia – like Finckenstein, a baroque palace where Maria Walewska met Napoleon and lived as his mistress in 1807.

The Jews presented few problems; the troublemakers had largely fled abroad. There they were free to agitate, and agitate they did. Eight weeks after Hitler's party came to power, the headline of England's *The Daily Express* on March 24, 1933 read: JUDEA DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY. JEWS OF ALL THE WORLD UNITE IN ACTION. (The Jews have since tried to suppress this front page; in the unforgiving light of history.) In National Socialist Berlin, Dr Joseph Goebbels, propaganda minister, answered immediately. Without consulting Hitler or the police authorities, he announced a one-day German boycott of all Jewish businesses. (The boycott date, April 1, was a Saturday and many businesses were shut for the Sabbath anyway.) A week later the Reich passed a new law for the 'restoration' of Germany's civil service; it excluded all Jews from posts of teachers, professors, and judges. The bitten could bite too, but for the next years, as the Moscow documents show, Dr Goebbels's boycott hurt the economic revival more than its intended victims.

The 700,000-plus Jews who had settled down on Germany were among the most assimilated in Europe; rather than Yiddish they spoke barely accented German, and had little inclination to leave. Most Jews felt at home. The former chancellor Heinrich Brüning would later point out: 'If the Jews had been treated so badly from the beginning of the [Hitler] regime, it could not be explained that so very few of them left the country before 1938.'

Firmly entrenched in power by 1935, Hitler could afford to remain conciliatory.

The problem was Dr Goebbels. In September 1937 Hitler had already mentioned concerns about Goebbels's activism. 'Baron von Neurath told me,' reported Sir Nevile Henderson, the new British ambassador, 'that the Chancellor recently asked him whether a

good man could be found to explain to the world the true aims and constitution of Nazism.' Hitler preferred the status quo.

HITLER'S LAISSEZ-FAIRE ATTITUDE DID NOT SUIT the Party's 'Old Guard' or the SA Brownshirts, veterans who had survived the 1934 purge. That summer they started a campaign of violence, particularly along Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, seen as a favourite Jewish boulevard.

From June 24, 1935 there were anti-Jewish disturbances. Police chief Count von Helldorff reported to the Gestapo: 'Over this period a growing public bitterness was perceptible.' The ubiquitous ice-cream parlours of the Jews were a particular target. The fact that the Berlin police had to protect the Jewish stores inflamed tempers even more.

The top Party figures and Reich officials took opposite sides. Göring read the reports and directed his State-Secretary, 'Pili' Körner, to write to the Gestapo that he intended to issue guidelines: 'He demands an end to demonstrations like those recently,' wrote Körner, 'which seem calculated to damage the reputation of the State and Movement.' In response, the Gestapo drafted seven pages of proposals. Jews accounted for thirty to fifty percent of all doctors, lawyers, and civil servants. So far the people had put up with this 'with admirable forbearance,' but those days were now over. The Jews, said the Gestapo, were doing everything they could to halt what it termed the legitimate rise of anti-Semitism. 'Their arrogance went so far that the Jews even tried to disrupt with protest demos the première of an anti-Semitic film, designated "politically worthwhile".'

'Unfortunately hostile elements are exploiting the public mood to settle the Jewish Question in their own way, cloaking themselves with ostensibly National Socialist fervour, while actually harming the reputation of the State and Movement.' They should curtail the Jews' rights of association, with one exception: 'With regard to the upcoming 1936 Olympiad, Jewish sports associations are to be allowed to conduct free sporting activities.' They should also watch the tendency of Jews to migrate into the larger cities, as cities were 'breeding grounds for atrocity-propaganda.' 'Not the individual,' the Gestapo concluded, 'but only the proper State organs are authorised

to confront the machinations of these anti-state elements, and to stamp out [*restlos ausrotten*] the antibodies damaging our people.'

The upshot was a conference at the Berlin city hall on July 30, 1935, attended by the mayor, Gestapo, police, and Gauleiters to discuss more subtle ways of forcing the Jews out. Various chicaneries were discussed; for example to put Jewish ice-cream parlours out of business by requiring proper toilets. Or, where Jewish tenants claimed that landlords were overcharging, the tribunals were on principle to rule in favour of the landlord. With the coming Olympiad in mind, signs banning Jews from municipal baths were to be removed. More importantly, marriages between the races should henceforth be prevented ('Berlin's registrars have already been directed to refrain from officiating at such weddings').

MOST OF THIS DISTURBED DR HJALMAR SCHACHT, Hitler's minister of economics. He warned of damaging side-effects on the economy; if Jewish firms went out of business, they would be unable to pay taxes or hire Aryan employees. Hitler agreed, and on August 2 that year Rudolf Hess, his deputy, circulated the first of several secret decrees prohibiting excesses against 'Jews or Jewish *provocateurs*' and demanding the prosecution of anybody causing criminal damage or bodily harm to them. The Party veterans felt betrayed, but on August 8 Hitler again forbade 'individual actions' against Jews.

On the thirteenth, Schacht called a conference for the twentieth in his ministry, upgrading it two days later to a *Chefbesprechung*, Cabinet level – *i.e.*, ministers or their state secretaries were to attend in person. Still on vacation, Himmler left it to Heydrich to attend.

Schacht himself presided, joined by Frick (Reich Minister of the Interior), Gürtner (Justice), Johannes Popitz (Finance), Heydrich, and leading Party and law officials. The current lawlessness was making his job impossible, Schacht said. He listed countless examples like the Leipzig Fair and the chemical industry where Party actions were hurting German interests far more than the Jews. He mentioned insults to foreign diplomats buying in a department store, and Gauleiter Julius Streicher's prohibition on employing Jewish salesmen abroad, although, as Schacht argued, 'the entire

world business structure is in Jewish hands.' British tourists were cancelling bookings in spas, and an American purchasing centre had moved out of Berlin to Prague. Four trade ministers of South American countries were Jews, he pointed out. 'In Poland their entire foreign trade is run by the Jews.'

The Party was thinly represented at this August 20 conference. Like Himmler – who stayed down in Gmund – Dr Goebbels stayed away; his ministry was represented by a civil servant, *Ministerial-direktor* Wilhelm Haegert. This did not stop the Party men present, from voicing discontent. Dr Frick assured them that the Reich would solve the Jewish Question slowly 'but by entirely legal means,' and that this 'foreign body' would be 'excreted' without trace; but, he said, Hitler and Hess had forbidden actions against Jews 'under any circumstances' and he as minister of the interior had prepared a directive to all provincial governments and the Gestapo, ordering that any anti-Jewish malefactor be treated as a 'rebel and *provocateur*.'

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT ALL BOILED DOWN to what was possible. Their eyes turned to Reinhard Heydrich, now an SS *Gruppenführer,* who was present. He lamented that as things currently stood, 'the Gestapo is always the fall guy, because it is we who sometimes have to take sides against the Party.' Heydrich saw only two solutions:

> 1.) legislative measures by the state, which step by step bring closer the objective of totally eliminating [*ausrotten*] the Jews' influence, as directed by the Führer; and
>
> 2) comprehensive political schooling of both Party and public on the need for strict discipline *vis-à-vis* the Jewish Question.

He put to them four proposals: not only should mixed marriages, Jew with Aryan, be made illegal, but any sexual relations whatever. That would really send the Jews scampering. They should also be banned from purchasing or leasing real estate; they should be denied all civil rights; and they should be stopped from migrating into Germany's bigger cities.

Throughout all these discussions on what eventually became the

Nuremberg Laws, Himmler was away from Berlin. His diary shows he had left on July 12, and did not return until October 2, 1935.

ON SEPTEMBER THE FIFTEENTH, during the 1935 Party Rally, the Reichstag met at Nuremberg for the first time in four hundred years, filling the hall of the *Industrie- und Kulturverein*. Hitler usually made some major policy pronouncement at the rally, and the ministry of the interior provided him with two new laws for the purpose: one adopting the swastika as Germany's national flag; and one legally defining 'a Jew.' Dr Goebbels was closely involved: on the thirteenth he talked through the draft laws with Hess and Frick: 'New citizenship law,' he recorded in his diary. 'Ban on Jewish marriages. . . We're still tweaking it. But that's what's decided. It'll preserve purity.'

The Nuremberg laws came as a surprise. Himmler was not consulted, as Karl Wolff later confirmed. Of course, Himmler was not even of Cabinet rank yet. The new 'Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour' defined that anybody with one or two Jewish grandparents was a *Mischling*, a mongrel, and that certain professions would remain open only to pure Germans. It became a felony for a Jew to marry a pure German, or for a Jew to have sexual relations outside marriage with a German woman. (Interestingly, only the Jewish male would be prosecuted for such sexual relations, not the woman.)

As Hitler said, announcing the laws to the Reichstag at this meeting in Nuremberg, with Himmler this time listening: 'We have no choice but to contain the problem through legislative measures.' Hitler expressed the pious hope that it might yet be possible to create 'a basis on which the German people can have a tolerable relationship with the Jews.' If the attempt to find a legislative solution failed they would have to refer the Jewish Question to the Party for what he called 'a finite solution.' (He used the German phrase *endgültige Lösung*.)

The public received the Nuremberg Laws warmly, as Heydrich's agents reported; this would take the wind out of the troublemakers' sails. Even German Jews hoped that this clarification of their legal status might prove beneficial. Foreign Jews took a more jaundiced view; it did not suit their book at all, and the cycle of violence resumed.

ON EACH OCCASION OVER THE NEXT DECADE it was some Jewish action that triggered a new campaign against them, ratcheting it up another notch, toward its brutal, and as yet unthinkable, climax. Paradoxically the 'Nazis', the SS, and the Zionists all had dogs in the same fight. The Zionists were not dismayed to see persecution within Europe increase, as it prospered their own cause – Jewish emigration to Palestine. It is hard otherwise to explain what followed: on February 4, 1936 a Jewish stranger entered the home of a German living in Davos, Switzerland, and pumped five bullets into him. The victim's name, Gustloff, is less important than the identity of his Croatian assassin. He was David Frankfurter, 26, a rabbi's son who had emigrated to Switzerland in 1934 and was studying medicine. His victim Gustloff had joined the Party in 1932 and was active in Switzerland's expatriate German community. (His martyred name became more famous in 1945, as a Russian submarine torpedoed the cruise-liner *Wilhelm Gustloff,* named in his memory, with dreadful loss of life: over nine thousand refugees were drowned.)

Hitler's low-key response to this murder was significant. He actually forbade reprisals. Hess again issued secret orders 'to prevent outrages against Jews.' 'It is for the Führer alone to decide what policy to adopt from case to case,' he ordered. 'No Party member is to act off his own bat.' From his own purse, Hitler awarded Gustloff's widow a pension of 400 marks a month. Gustloff's mortal remains were transported northward to his birthplace in Schwerin for burial. Himmler attended the state funeral with Hitler, Göring, and the Reich Cabinet.

MEANWHILE SWITZERLAND HONOURABLY PUT the murderer Davsid Frankfurter on trial. There was tenuous evidence that a shadowy Paris-based International League against Anti-Semitism (*Ligue internationale Contre l'Antisémitism, LICA*) had put him up to it. They certainly contributed their vice-president Dr Leon Castro as one of his defence counsel; another counsel was the famous Vincent de Moro-Giafferi. Perhaps foolishly, in light of later events, the best-selling author Emil Ludwig, son of Breslau optician Herman Cohn, published a book, *The Murder in Davos*, of such a gloating tenor that Goebbels wrote: 'This Jewish plague must be eradicated.

Totally. Nothing must be left.' At his trial Frankfurter explained that he had believed press reports that Hitler was dying of cancer; disappointed in this respect, he had hoped to bump off Göring or Goebbels instead, and then settled for Gustloff. The Swiss sentenced him to eighteen years. Well might Frankfurter's much wiser father have lamented, visiting him in prison: 'Who actually needed this?' But there was more.

HIMMLER'S FATHER WAS living as a retired and ageing *Geheimrat* at No. 6 Lachnerstrasse in Munich. On November 26, 1935 Heini dictated a rather colourless letter to him from Königsberg, East Prussia: 'I've been here on a particular matter, for three days,' he wrote, while not identifying the problem. 'It just adds to the work I have to do.' He had planned to be hunting chamois down in Bavaria, 'but my trip up here has thrown a spanner in the works.'

Heinrich's letters home only occasionally touched on the larger matters crowding into his daily life. Vacationing in Gmund, on the last day of 1935, he sent his father a recently published brochure by the Swiss author Friedrich Hasselbacher, entitled *Treachery and Treason of the Lodges during the World War*. 'Since we came back from your visit, Little Püppi' Heini wrote, referring to Gudrun, 'has been in bed with a bad cold.' His father replied, 'We're glad to hear that dear Püppi's getting better; she was obviously off-colour on Christmas Day.' On January 4, 1936, Heinrich replied to one request: 'Dear Father, I got your letter. . . I'll follow up on M. and ask to be shown the reports. I'll inform you verbally in due course. Best wishes and Heil Hitler,' he concluded, and added: 'and to dear Mother.'

His father thanked him, but added a noticeably cautious postscript: 'I found the attached letter this noon from Lieutenant Dr Brenner of Wiesbaden, about his son's arrest. He took part on November 9, 1923 as a schoolboy, and he has paid for it since then, so I just hope he can establish his innocence. Otherwise I'd be awfully sorry for having commended him to you. I did so in good faith.' On April 24, 1936 Heini did him one final little favour, writing: 'I was just a couple of days in Regensburg and brought back the personnel file of my maternal grandfather.'

His mother also forwarded private pleas to Himmler. 'My dear Heinrich,' she wrote on the last day of April, addressing him more sternly. 'I have to pass on to you a request entrusted to me by another poor mother, who works in a millinery where I'm a customer: it's to do with the prisoner Erber who's been in Dachau for three years now. Please look into this yourself. . . Don't be mad at me for nagging, just do it! My dearest good wishes, and loving kisses from your Mummy.'

GEBHARD HIMMLER TOLD us that his brother did look conscientiously into every such case. Few won their freedom this way. It was not easy to get out of Dachau. When Sigmund Rascher, a favourite of Himmler's and a doctor at the camp, began taking bribes from prisoners it led to his own sticky end.

On August 14, 1936 Himmler dictated a letter to both his parents adopting a tone which was already perceptibly distant:

> I won't get round to answering Father's letter as I've got too much to do here. I'd just like to answer Mother's latest lines of August 3, about which I was very pleased. Sorry I just couldn't get over to you for a visit before the Olympiad. I've had SS *Brigadeführer* Pohl informed to put a car at your disposal for a drive out to Chiemsee. I'd like to ask Dad to contact him direct. My best wishes and Heil Hitler! – H.

Heinrich Himmler's father died on October 29, 1936 and Heini seldom mentioned him after that. During the religious part of the funeral, the three brothers Heini, Ernst and Gebhard stood to one side, wearing their SS uniforms. They approached the open grave, but only after the priest had withdrawn. Letters with condolences came, many from pupils who had admired the old 'Mr Chips' who had taught them. Most were handwritten. The acknowledgment which the Reichsführer sent was impersonal – and printed. 'I trust you will understand,' he wrote. Following his usual custom, he inserted just the date, '16th,' in his own hand before 'November.' As for the old *Geheimrat*, he was now spared the father's anguish of seeing his middle son's historic infamy.

HE HAD LIVED LONG ENOUGH to see Heini, still only thirty-five, rise to the pinnacle of his peacetime career, as Chief of German Police, on June 17, 1936. Hitler signed the appointment on June 26. It amalgamated all the police forces. Forthwith, Himmler headed both the green-uniformed regular police (*Ordnungspolizei*) and the Security Police, which controlled the Gestapo and the *Kripo*, the criminal investigation department (*Reichskriminalpolizeiamt*). Heydrich became chief of the Security Police. Himmler ranked equal to General Fritsch and Admiral Raeder as a commander-in-chief. The pinnacle of his peacetime career gained a seat in the Cabinet, immediately subordinate to the Führer. Hitler's status as a dictator became clearer, and Himmler's as his lieutenant.

'On June 17,' reminisced Himmler seven years later, 'I became Chief of German Police. . . In a truly selfless manner *Oberstgruppenführer* Daluege, as he now is, relinquished control of the criminal police . . . and ceded it to *Gruppenführer* Heydrich as an essential component of the Security Police.' Kurt Daluege was left in charge of the *Ordnungspolizei*; we shall meet him later on the blood-soaked killing-fields of the east. It was Daluege who on October 14, 1941 would sign the first order deporting German Jews to eastern Poland.

Three years older than Heinrich Himmler, and an inch or two taller, Daluege's hooked nose and eyebrows gave him a supercilious air. When still in his teens he had fought in the Great War and stopped several bullets, and he had the injury-badge to prove it.

He had been among those who had stormed the Annaberg in Upper Silesia, retaking it from Polish insurgents. In 1926 he had been given command of the SA in northern Germany and appointed as deputy Gauleiter of Berlin. Hitler persuaded him to transfer to the SS in 1930, and he had smashed the Stennes 'revolt.' After January 1933 Göring called Daluege into the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. Until then, Daluege related to post-war interrogators, he and the Reichsführer SS had been at loggerheads, 'because in 1933 . . . Himmler possibly feared disadvantageous consequences for his position.'

Himmler wanted his SS to replace Daluege's regular police. Willy Suchanek, who became his liaison officer to the regular police late in 1936, did what he could to protect Daluege's interests. He emphasised

later that while Heydrich was forever in and out of Himmler's office in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, Daluege was all but a stranger there. Himmler wedged SS men into the security and police structure wherever he could, while preserving a veneer of propriety. When the mayor of Berlin asked in the summer of 1935 to see the file on SS *Oberführer* Fritz Karl Engel, who had been obliged to resign as police chief of Stettin, Himmler inquired first of Daluege whether it would be proper to do so: he was keen to do the right thing by the city, 'while at the same time not compromising Engel's future career.' Daluege's courage was undeniable, but he himself later recognised the increasing mental instability which forced his retirement in 1943.

THAT YEAR, 1936, THE OLYMPIC GAMES CAME TO Germany, and the Reich was on its best behaviour. The winter games started in February in Garmisch and the summer games in August in Berlin. Himmler was responsible for security. The Olympic Committee asked the Gestapo to keep a low profile; Heydrich housed the SD unit in the 'Villa Erika' in Garmisch, camouflaged as an SS ski-training camp. They picked up a number of threats against Hitler's life, but nothing came of them. A female who had frequently badgered the Führer in the past, a Frau Trapp, turned up; the Gestapo satisfied themselves with just telling her to dance back to where she had come from.

Then Himmler went to Italy. Nothing is known of the purpose. He had sojourned briefly in Venice once in June 1933 and done the tourist spots, like the Lido and Grand Canal: 'We went in the evening in a gondola,' he wrote to Marga. 'You must come too one day and see.' In October 1936, preceded by Heydrich and Daluege, Himmler went with Karl Wolff to Italy as Hitler's new Chief of Police, 'ostensibly,' as the British ambassador reported, to attend the annual Italian police display on October 19, and to confer with Mussolini the next day.

HIMMLER OPENED HIS MOST MODERN prison camp yet, at Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg near Berlin; he moved Theodor Eicke, running the prison-camp system, out there from Berlin. The first commandant was Karl-Otto Koch, a corrupt and brutal *Standartenführer*. On August 1, 1937, Himmler would open another camp

on an idyllic forest site at Buchenwald, a few miles outside Weimar; Koch moved down there, to his ultimate misfortune. In May 1938 Himmler opened another camp at Flossenbürg, with *Obersturmbannführer* Franz Ziereis as commandant; Ziereis also came to an unwanted end. Later Himmler set up a separate women's camp at Ravensbrück in Brandenburg, fifty miles north of Berlin; it opened in May 1939 under SS-*Sturmbannführer* Max Kögel. All Himmler's new camps followed Eicke's Dachau model.

There was one important limitation on Himmler's powers – the personal security of the Führer. After a November 1936 squabble between Christian Weber and Baron von Eberstein, about security at the Bürgerbräu beerhall gathering held on each November 9, Hitler ruled in the Party's favour: 'Here in this gathering,' he ordained, 'I am protected by my *Alte Kämpfer*, the Old Warriors, led by Christian Weber. The responsibility of the police ends at the entrances.'

On December 21, 1936 Himmler's officers arrested another would-be murderer, the twenty-year old Jew Helmut Hirsch. Blocked by the new Nuremberg Laws from further education in Germany, he had emigrated to Czechoslovakia and joined Otto Strasser's Black Front. Strasser's right hand man Heinrich Grunow sent him back to Germany on a mission limited, so he said, to blowing up Party targets in Nuremberg; Strasser promised him that Jews would be treated better when the Black Front came to power. Hirsch agreed under cross-examination that he would have assassinated Hitler.

Hirsch was arrested in a Stuttgart hotel where he had checked in, expecting to receive the necessary explosives. Berlin's policy was to soft-pedal this topic, and the trial was kept secret until March 1937. The actual citizenship of the Hirsch family was obscure, not an unusual situation with Jews. They persuaded Washington to anoint young Helmut as an American citizen, and to intervene diplomatically on his behalf, although he had never set foot in the U.S.A. The Reich authorities disregarded the campaign, and the guillotine in Berlin's Plötzensee prison ended the matter on June 4, 1937.

HIMMLER HAD FORMALLY created a new Personal Staff in November 1936 under Karl Wolff. Wolff would handle personnel, medals, guests,

ceremonies, and archeological digs like an expedition to Tibet.

Marga had wangled something like a second honeymoon out of Himmler, an extended vacation to Wiesbaden. They took in theatre productions and movies, like the Austrian operetta *Masquerade* (1934), and *A Woman of No Importance*, based on an Oscar Wilde play about illegitimacy and class. Heini resumed English lessons with a Mr Duffin and he took lessons to improve his bridge game too. She smiled for the street photographers as they strolled through Wiesbaden – she wearing a stylish beret, and he sporting his lucky Bavarian hat and a walking cane.

THE *EXTERNSTEINE* CONTINUED TO FASCINATE HIM. Ten days into this furlough he wrote in spiky handwriting from Wiesbaden to 'my dear Wölfchen,' addressing him in his new dignity as Chief of Personal Staff: Karl Wolff was now an SS *Brigadeführer*. Himmler asked Wolff to pull together everything known about these stone pillars, including local legends. 'The SD should investigate,' he wrote, 'whether the *Externsteine* played any part in witch-hunts in this region.' He asked for a report by December, when he returned from leave and signed off with a inquiry as to Wolff's health and that of Wiligut, 'Weisthor.' whom he had directed to look for the hidden meaning of the name *Externsteine*.

A few days later Himmler inspected the Saalburg in the province of Hesse. This was an expertly restored Roman fort, part of the defensive *limes germanicus* begun by the Romans a century after Christ to define their expanding empire and defend it against coarser native populations beyond. In its time, the Saalburg had housed two thousand Roman legionaries and civilians and boasted *thermae,* including changing rooms with underfloor heating, hot, cold, and tepid baths, and a *sudatorium* or sauna.

'Dear Wölfchen,' jested Himmler on November 26, 1936 on a picture postcard of the interior, 'Yes, and tally-ho to you too. Just for a change I'm having a look at a Roman castle. Best wishes to y'all from my wife and myself, and especially to you. – Your H. Himmler.'

Inspecting the Saalburg's features triggered many a thought in Himmler on how to house his own legions, and their prisoners, when

the time came. As their two months' vacation came to an end he took Marga to see the Wewelsburg on December 8 for a couple of days, then went back via Heidelberg to Gmund.

HE PROMOTED ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FAR and wide. There was a mystic aura rising from the tomb of King Heinrich I, Henry the Fowler. The king had died a thousand years before, on July 2, 936. He had defeated King Canute of Denmark, and withstood the French, the Slavs, and the Hungarians too. Himmler saw him as the founder of the First Reich, the father of the German nation. One thousand years to the day after King Heinrich's death, Himmler spoke a eulogy in the cathedral erected in his memory at Quedlinburg, calling him a 'noble farmer,' 'the Führer of a thousand years ago,' and *primus inter pares*, the first among equals.

Sensing himself perhaps the ancient monarch's reincarnation, Himmler often visited the crypt in Quedlinburg – the bones were no longer there, but his spirit surely lingered on. He decided to stage a ceremonial reburial right here in 1937 and wrote to Wolff at the end of June 1937, and to others too, 'I invite you to a solemn ceremony in the Heinrich Crypt on the Castle Hill at Quedlinburg on July 1, 1937 at midnight. We shall meet at Hotel Quedlinburger Hof at nine p.m.' In later years, his private staff used a new – private – name for him: King Heinrich, or 'K.H.' for short.

28: *Prime of Life*

THE YEAR 1937 was really Germany's last year of peace. It brought Heinrich Himmler, as Marga wrote on its last day, much worry, but also 'much recognition, advancement, and many honours.'

They had begun moving into a handsome three-storeyed official villa, in a narrow lane in Dahlem, a South-West Berlin garden suburb, built before the World War for a Frau Helene Luise Herz; she was probably a wealthy Jewess – her maiden name was Gans – and she had previously lived in Kurfürstendamm. The whole plot at Nos. 8 to 10 Dohnenstieg covered 4,855 square metres (52,260 square feet). The building and its smaller gardener's house was designed by Professor Bruno Paul; he had fallen out with the Party, but he was on a list of protected architects when the new war came.

Marga was not an easy employer. In 1937 she had eleven domestic employees between the two homes – a valet, two maids, cooks, gardeners and others. She hired and fired in a familiar female cycle of discontent. As 1937 ended Marga began a new diary. It indicates that she thought little of Heini's relatives, but kept her dislikes to the diary. She closely followed her husband's fortunes, and sensed conspiracies, 'hatred and envy,' all around. Among her close women friends were Ida, Countess von Wedel, wife of the police chief of Potsdam, and Anneliese, Joachim von Ribbentrop's influential

wife. She and Anneliese took turns to host tea parties. Opinionated and migraine-charged, Anneliese used to sit in on her husband's conferences, knitting-needles clicking, 'like the *tricoteuses* sitting beside Madame Guillotine,' as one of his staff remarked. In 1939 she had a lobotomy at Dr Gebhardt's Hohenlychen clinic. It left a crater the size of a pigeon's egg in her forehead; people affected not to notice.

Marga's diary glimpsed Heini's moods, but it seldom touched on his broader activities. She saw that he was overworked, and decreasingly present in the evenings. 'Should I drive over to Frau Prützmann,' she phoned him to ask in June 1937, referring to Christa, thirty-year old wife of SS-*Gruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann, who had been appointed police commander in Hamburg. 'Tell me by phone. I will do whatever you think right, all the same to me.' Prützmann was destined to die in the same house as Himmler, and the same way.

Very rarely she jotted down private views about Jews and 'Polacks'. Such private observations were fewer than might be expected in the wife of Himmler. She dismissed the natives of Strasbourg as racially unimpressive, with receding foreheads. The early death in action of Wedel's son Wilhelm, an eighteen-year-old Waffen-SS officer, evoked a judgement that he had been 'racially outstanding, modest and youthful.' Among their friends were *Reichsleiter* Philipp Bouhler and his wife: the blonde Heli Bouhler was beautiful and when it was all over would throw herself to her death from a castle window after her husband had swallowed a poison draught. Bouhler, of whom we shall hear more, figures in Himmler's diary on October 7, 1937, presenting the Reichsführer with a Nuremberg sausage-bowl for his thirty-seventh birthday: currying favour, it might be said.

HEYDRICH OCCASIONALLY FIGURES IN MARGA'S diary. His adjutant Neumann knew the father, and recalled the 'dubious' nose. He recalled too the Tuchachevsky affair, how Heydrich and cronies Alfred Naujocks and Dr Hermann Behrends had looked around furtively before discussing documents that they were forging with Russian émigrés to frame the Soviet marshal Mikhail Nikolayevich Tuchachevksy in a sophomoric plot against Stalin. Behrends carried the papers to Prague where they were sold to known Moscow agents.

Tuchachevksy and seven generals were executed as traitors on June 11, 1937 – for which Heydrich liked to take credit.

Himmler began a lifelong campaign against homosexuality. On January 16, 1937 he addressed a police audience on that perversion and abortion. To SS generals in February he again talked about homosexuality and what is now cynically called '*gay*-dar'. He said,

> These people know each other with just a glance across a room. If you have 500 men at a dance, within a half hour they have mutually picked out those who have the same disposition as they. How that happens, we straight folks cannot at all imagine.

He regarded the homosexual's perversions in the same light as abortion. 'Unfortunately we do not have it as easy as our ancestors. . . The homosexual, who was called *Urning*, was sunk in the swamp. . . That was not a penalty, but rather just the extinction of an abnormal life. That had to be removed, as we pull out nettles and throw them in a pile and burn them. . . With us unfortunately that is, I have to say, no longer possible.' He confidentially asked SS officers to put his view informally and conversationally in talks with individuals: 'In the SS today we still have about one case of homosexuality a month, approximately eight to ten cases per year.'

> I have now decided upon the following: in each case these people will be publicly degraded, expelled, and handed over to the courts. Following completion of the punishment laid down by the court, by my orders they will be sent to a concentration camp, and they will be shot while trying to escape.

He hoped thereby finally to have done with homosexuals in the SS, even if it did not solve the sticky problem for all of Germany. He took up the subject again at a Gauleiter conference in June 1937. 'Very thorough and with much material. Enlightening and interesting.' So Dr Goebbels characterised the talk. 'Himmler knows his stuff.'

In 1940 he was shown a draft manuscript about the Waffen-SS in the Polish campaign, and choked on one passage, describing

how 'a flaxen-haired adjutant' had 'heartily embraced' another SS officer; he changed the wording to 'gave him a hearty thump on his shoulder.' After briefing the Reichsführer, an unfortunately named SS *Obersturmbannführer* Bender wrote to the SS court on October 26, 1943, that in principle 'serious homosexual felons' were to be neutralised by execution, while lesser cases were punished by KZ, concentration camp.

THE WIFE OF A BAVARIAN SS OFFICER POSTED to Siegen in Westphalia, far to the north, pleaded with Himmler to post him back to Munich; he lectured her that he could well understand her plea, but he could not comply: 'I'm in much the same boat,' he wrote her from Berlin. His policy was as far as possible to transfer his subordinates from South to North, and from West to East, so that they would get to know other parts of their Fatherland beyond just their home patch.

Writing to a museum director in Saxony, he casually used the mediæval word 'Brachmond' instead of 'June'. With Yuletide approaching in 1937, Himmler ordered that Yule candles should be handed round after the Christmas trees had been lit, women sitting next to men selected by lot. In 1938 he was requested to get young poets to compose Germanic carols for Yuletide, which were to replace old Christian ones.

Conditioned by his years in university, his attitude to duelling was awkward: A foreign correspondent for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Roland Strunk, had gone overseas on a two-year assignment; a Hitler-Youth official Horst Krutschinna fancied Strunk's wife; a duel with pistols was the result, but Krutschinna put a bullet in the wronged husband and killed him. Krutschinna's honour was satisfied, 'such being the Germanic concept of honour,' as Goebbels noted sarcastically on October 23, 1937; 'well, cheers to that! I tell Himmler my opinion on that quite frankly. He is quite meek.' The next day he found Hitler livid about the Strunk case. Julius Schaub confirmed how angry Hitler was. The Führer sent the 'heroic' shooter to join the troops in Spain. A few days later, Helldorff came to see his friend Goebbels. 'I tell him my standpoint on Strunk,' wrote Goebbels. 'He is full of prejudices there. I fix those. But he does

curse Himmler and his mania for centralisation. Rightly so!'

Himmler had developed a sense of mission. Addressing army staff officers in 1937, many of them far older than he, he said: 'We must be perfectly clear that in a future war we shall have not only the front of the army on the land, of the navy at sea, and of the air force in the skies over Germany; we shall have a fourth theatre of operations – Inner Germany.' This would be the future SS front. 'Unless' he continued, 'we can manage to hold this fourth front the other three fronts . . . will again be victims of a stab in the back.'

Himmler rarely expressed views on foreign policy. He admired Joachim von Ribbentrop as the coming man, and bestowed honorary SS rank on him. When a rumour spread later that the two had fallen out, the British ambassador, Henderson, disagreed: 'I haven't seen Ribbentrop in his office for over a month,' he would admit in mid-1939, 'but when I was last there, Himmler's photo was still prominently displayed, the only one except for the Führer's.'

IN SEPTEMBER 1937 Benito Mussolini paid a state visit to Berlin, and Himmler ran security, in fact he ran it so tightly that nobody could get through to cheer, as Hitler ironically told him. 'But that's how Munich man likes it,' sniffed Goebbels privately. 'He's indolent and prefers to stay home and sleep in, on his free Saturdays.' A few days later, on October 18, Himmler again went down to Italy to represent Germany at the police festival; he took Daluege and Heydrich with him, and lingered some time after the parade with Mussolini.

Mussolini's chief of police Arturo Bocchini was twenty years Himmler's senior and a Professor – but Italy was a country where everybody had titles. Himmler and Bocchini struck up a friendship and exchanged telegrams regularly. It baffled Eugen Dollmann, Himmler's interpreter: 'If you so much as *breathed* a word of criticism of Bocchini, you were done for!' Bocchini and Himmler: the two were like chalk and cheese – a larger-than-life *bon vivant*, a wine-lover on the one hand; and the puritan, incorruptible Himmler on the other.

The highlight of this first encounter was a visit to the Villa Securitas which Bocchini had built in his home town San Giorgio del Sannio, east of Naples – the street is still named after his father. Flags greeted

them everywhere; the flags were embellished with a rather skinny swastika, sometimes back to front, but this was Italy. The villa's grounds were furnished with nude statues of as much ingenuity as beauty – a press on a secret knob could bring water spurting from all the usual orifices, and some others too. Dollmann warned their host that Himmler was unlikely to see the funny side of it. The Italian persisted: 'Men find it lovely.' Himmler stood innocently admiring the four marble goddesses. Bocchini pressed the knob, and the jets sprinkled him. 'He was speechless,' said Dollmann, 'but delighted.'

The *Daily Mail*'s Berlin correspondent George Ward Price covered this brief October 1937 visit to Italy. The talk in Berlin afterwards was of the possibility of war with Britain, he said. 'Goebbels, Hess, and Himmler were already frankly prepared for it at any moment, and were having an influence on Hitler, who hitherto had refused to consider the mere possibility.' Ward Price regarded Dr Goebbels as exercising the most pernicious influence on Hitler, for example 'getting the latter to commit himself to a course of action without allowing him to realise what he had done, and then presenting him with a fait accompli.' That was well observed.

Himmler's instincts, like Hitler's, were to the east, not to the south. He easily accepted Hitler's dictate that the South Tyrol was Italian. If he established relations with individual Italians like Bocchini (later succeeded by Carmine Senise), it was purely to get the lowdown on leading Italians for Heydrich's indexes.

Otherwise Himmler was bored by the Fascists, and he failed to succumb to the country's women. Apart from one more visit to Italy in 1937, his incursions were purely on official business – one accompanying Hitler in 1938, one in 1939, in 1940 for Bocchini's funeral, and not again until 1942. Dollmann said: 'He had very definite theories about the crimes committed in the past by German rulers (the Hohenstaufens in particular) and enunciated the doctrine, "never again a drop of German blood for Italy on Italian soil".'

29: *The Wife's Diary*

LATE IN 1937 Marga Himmler began a diary. It portrays family contentment, as Gudrun began to grow older, and the tea-partying, and tongue-wagging of the wives of ministers, Party brasshats, and ambassadors in Berlin. She jotted things in her diary until a few weeks before the war ended. 'All Germany is looking up to him,' she would write in the wistful last entry on February 21, 1945 – a week after the horrors of Dresden. Gudrun also kept a diary: 'Everybody's getting medals and awards, just not Daddy. And he should be top of the list. If it weren't for him, things would be a lot different.'

Sixty years after Marga wrote those words, we were fortunate to be a guest of the Stapo, in Vienna, and our involuntary confinement provided an opportunity to mull over Marga's sometimes difficult diary pages. There was time, in that Vienna prison cell, to sense Marga's curiosity about Heini's female secretary, and the growing estrangement; and opportunity to ponder for days on little mysteries, like Marga's movements on July 20, 1944 (which might indicate that Heini had told her *that morning* to get out of Berlin fast – before that afternoon's historic, and treasonable, event). The diary points up her ignorance of what Heydrich's men were up to in the East. Like all such diaries, what is missing is often as significant as what we find.

AT THE TIME SHE BEGAN that diary, she had been married for nine years. She was bored and unfulfilled. She worried about her weight; she was wrapped up in her family, taking in movies and theatres in those pre-television days, and trying to learn English again – perhaps Heini had remarked on that new secretary, Hedwig, twenty years younger than Marga and good at English and so much else.

Marga abhorred alcohol, but she did like tea. She staged tea-parties, and played rubbers of bridge in which Heini often joined. Emulating the secretary, she tried to keep fit, with tennis and swimming, and attempted to ski. The diary's pages began to reflect that familiar attention-gatherer, female illnesses of one sort or another. They were sometimes real, the result of an indifferently cooked Italian banquet; or injuries from an exploding water-heater; or sometimes inherited, like hobbling feet. In her attempts to recapture the earlier ardour of Heini's attention she was inevitably pushing him further away.

'Püppi is still doing badly at dictation,' recorded Marga, referring to Gudrun. 'We often call her Piglet (*Schweinchen*) and one day she answered back, with "Piglet-Mummy". . . So adorable.' Two days later she added, 'Püppi tries very hard and studies a lot.' In 1938 Marga hired a tutor, a Mrs Görlitzer. It was as much for company as for her little girl's education. Their foster-child Gerhard von der Ahé also skulked across the diary pages: he excelled only in deliquency. 'Gerhard behaves very badly. He lies, steals, and plays hooky from school. I don't know what to say.' His biological mother refused to have the boy back, and demanded more money instead. Heini was unhappy about it, and so was Marga. 'He is a criminal by nature.' 'With Gerhard, terrible things are always happening,' she wrote.

REINHARD HEYDRICH WAS ALSO ENTERING A BARREN patch in his marriage. His wife Lina fell foul of both the Himmlers. 'Mrs Himmler did not like me,' Lina said later. The 1936 Berlin Olympics had brought this friction to the surface. As a fencing champion, Heydrich belonged to the Olympic Committee: 'The wives of the members had privileges,' Lina recalled. 'Good seats, invitations.' Marga Himmler got no privileges and did not enjoy taking second place. That was the last time Lina set foot in the Himmler household. 'At any rate his

whole displeasure fell on me. He accused my husband [Heydrich] of not being able to rein me in, though I lived as modestly as anybody.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER WORKED HARD at his marriage. That autumn of 1937 he took Marga on an extended vacation beginning on November 13. Leaving behind him a cauldron of political intrigues – Hitler had just apprised the three commanders-in-chief of his strategic intentions at the secret 'Hossbach Conference' on November 5 – and Heydrich in charge in Berlin, the Himmlers set out for Rome. Dr Dollmann again accompanied them as interpreter, and 'Professor' Bocchini met them at Termini station with a bouquet of flowers.

The Himmlers acted like any other German tourists: trattorias, towels, boats, beach-towels, and warm seas. Bocchini trundled them to their restaurants and museums in a horse-drawn carriage. On the sixteenth, Heini stood before one of Rome's most famous treasures, the Dying Gaul. Over two millennia before, an unknown European had sculpted this marble statue, displaying in finest anatomical detail the defeated warrior's magnificent physique and stoic resignation to death. Lord Byron had described this very statue in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

> I see before me the gladiator lie
> He leans upon his hand – his manly brow
> Consents to death, but conquers agony,
> And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
> And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
> From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one . . .

Now the Himmlers could see the chiselled gash and polished 'last drops' of marble blood, and thrilled at this human artistry and skill, of which other continents and peoples have proved incapable. 'H. was tremendously impressed and deeply pleased,' wrote Marga, hastily, never one for flowery language when a few clichés would do, because then it was on to the Forum. 'Here we saw buildings erected two thousand years ago on a scale that almost sounds incredible. It is Mussolini who has had to dig out all these magnificent structures.

H.'s knowledge of all this history is vast.' Travelling on to Naples, Bocchini escorted them to the other show-piece Fascist projects – cities founded after Mussolini had drained the malaria-infested Pontine Marshes, of Sabaudia and Littoria (now less provocatively renamed Latina). Calling in at Herculaneum and Pompeii, Marga saw the marble fountains still spurting water, its people frozen where they died. 'It was just upsetting to see how the people were caught unawares,' wrote his wife. 'Pompeii . . . was swamped by the rain of ash, and its population poisoned by the gases. . . There were two theatres in Pompeii and a bar at every corner.' Heini cautiously still gave Italian fountains, whether marble or otherwise, a wide berth.

The Reichsführer found mosaic floors inlaid with ancient swastikas. In Naples the villa La Floridiana caught their imagination; a Bourbon king, Ferdinand I, had given it to his mistress, Lucia Migliaccio Partanna, duchess of Floridia – it sounded so romantic to a Berlin *Hausfrau*, this world of kings and concubines. The streets ran wild with urchins, and Marga's heart sang at a land so blessed with children. In Heini's little car they drove on, two hundred miles of weary bends to Cosenza. 'The crowd outside the hotel applauded us, which is a great honour.' They lunched with the Prefect – the lunch had many courses and Himmler ignored his stomach's warnings. Marga studied the Prefect's wife – a woman of advanced years, to judge by her wrinkles from decades in the sun. Himmler murmured a polite compliment on her beauty. '*Sì,*' said the heartless Bocchini, '*una bella antica* – a lovely old antique.'

To more applause from the townsfolk, they drove off in rain and fog. Perhaps he had intended while in Cosenza to search for the grave of Alaric the Goth. They halted at Vadue, the start of the valley of the Busento River, under the riverbed of which Alaric is said to have been buried in 410, surrounded by the treasures of war. The car finally gave up beneath Himmler. He sipped an espresso while mechanics fixed it, but Marga's own stomach was also in rebellion.

IN GERMANY, THINGS were coming slowly to a boil. After a half-hour ferry crossing to Sicily, they arrived at Taormina, where they would spend seventeen days. Letters were waiting. 'Our sincerest congrat-

ulations on birth of son and heir,' the Himmler couple cabled to Rudolf Hess and his wife on November 22, 1937, on the birth of their Wolf-Rüdiger. Marga knew that Heini had longed for a son too.

Here in Taormina, the Himmlers found themselves again unaccountably popular. Heini squared up to tennis, swam, and played bridge; Marga took tennis lessons from a handsome Sicilian pro, and decided yet again to polish up her English. They snoozed in their hotel room, or strolled and compared the Italian *scirocco* with the Bavarian 'Föhn,' a hot mountain wind. The theatre's ruins here dated back a mere fifteen hundred years, more modern than Rome's, and had been built to house twenty thousand spectators. They drove over to Syracuse. 'We were shown the catacombs, with a Franciscan monk as a guide, a smart-ass, and he left all H.'s questions unanswered.' A church here had its roof parked on stubby columns dating back before Christ, and there was a Greek theatre carved out of rocks 3,500 years ago. While other continents had slept away their short and savage lives, Europe had built temples, calculated and composed, and crafted and sculpted: that was the lesson everywhere.

Rudi Brandt came by Himmler's plane to Catania, bringing more news from home. Together they visited Palermo, and tramped round more castles and museums. Bocchini was the perfect host, and satisfied Himmler's appetite for artefacts. Experts related the Germanic origins of the Sikuli, the original inhabitants of Sicily, and in a museum officials showed Himmler a shepherd's crook inscribed with runes. Himmler cast around for more. The artful Bocchini saw to it that several were at once forthcoming. Before leaving Naples, Himmler resumed the search for the burial site of Alaric, and Bocchini, the police chief, considered burying genuine artefacts brought in from Naples museums, to hurry things to a fruitful end.

WITH ONE WEEK LEFT of their vacation, on December 4, 1937 they crossed the Mediterranean in Himmler's plane, stopped over in British Malta and flew to Libya, an Italian colony. Here in the desert the Italians were excavating Leptis Magna, a lost Roman city. Built to house 150,000 inhabitants, it had been swallowed by the drifting sands thirteen hundred years ago. 'Once a city of infinite size, wealth,

and grandeur,' wrote Marga, puzzled. 'But with hundreds of different marble halls and statues. I kept thinking, why are the people so poor now? Perhaps because nobody has slaves any more?' Civilisation here passed its peak in 150 A.D. In parts of Africa, civilisation had yet to arrive: a dark continent of superstitions, cannibalism, and savagery.

The Himmlers flew to the southwest, penetrating three hundred miles into the Sahara: Ghadames was an oasis, an outpost of Mussolini's empire. Outside the walls camped the nomadic Tuaregs, living lives reminiscent of Ghenghis Khan. The Arabs had skins of a dark blue-black, their teeth were white, and their faces covered with flies. Marga found the local Muslim customs quaint: 'The houses are built one into another, it's like walking through a labyrinth. Only women and children are allowed to live up on the roof-tops. They come down once a year on December 23. . . When I came out on top the women fled and the children screamed and cried and covered their faces.' The oasis had one hotel; it was clean – unlike Naples.

Himmler had reached the southernmost point in his life; his life was now four-fifths over, and only History knew what still lay ahead.

HE WAS STILL SOAKING UP IMPRESSIONS. BACK in Tripoli on December 7, the Himmlers visited a mosque and the Jewish quarter. 'The mosque had a very impressive, spiritual atmosphere,' found Marga, 'and the Jewish quarter horrendously dirty, and that stench! The Arabs are much much cleaner.' (They had of course invented soap.) The 'intelligent, good-looking' General Italo Balbo, governor general of Libya, invited them to dinner with eighteen others. Marga studied Balbo's wife: good-looking, but conceited, she decided.

HEINI WAS A GLUTTON FOR TOMBS, OF course, and before leaving Naples they visited the tomb of Konradin von Hohenstaufen, short-lived King of the Sicilies, and Jerusalem; and as monarchs' lives go, they don't come much shorter. He was beheaded at sixteen in Naples in 1268. Like tourists, the Himmlers spent some hours traipsing around Greek temples, none more recent than 400 A.D., but Himmler's stomach was once again in rebellion. It was the lobsters in Rome which finally took him down. Marga too was afflicted,

which did not stop them from accepting Bocchini's invitation to a farewell dinner. 'I cannot eat anything,' she wrote, but added, 'What an apartment, so many valuables.' She asked to be taken straight to their Pullman coach at midnight. Grimacing, Himmler contrived to stay on two more hours with Bocchini. Their train left for Berlin in the morning, with the Himmlers a picture of misery – but in future years she looked back on this, 'our wonderful journey,' with affection.

Bocchini and Himmler remained good friends. Three years later, Dollmann suddenly wrote him from Italy: Bocchini was on his deathbed, and he had been summoned to witness the testament. The old prankster had left his entire fortune to an eighteen-year old niece.

THE HIMMLERS RETURNED TO BERLIN on December 14, 1937. Odd events now followed. That same day Field Marshal von Blomberg told Goebbels that he planned to marry a Berlin girl of twenty-four (he was now nearly sixty). They had met, he said, at the Golf Hotel at Oberhof. Goebbels wished him luck; Blomberg's family voiced their disquiet, and he returned to the Golf Hotel alone to think it over. He did not have long, because on December 20, the old Field Marshal Ludendorff died and General Wilhelm Keitel fetched Blomberg to deliver the eulogy two days later.

Odder still: As the solemn ceremony in Munich ended, with Ludendorff's coffin on its gun carriage and the funeral procession slow-marching away from the Feldherrnhalle, Hitler and his retinue broke away to rejoin their cars. The adjutants heard Blomberg ask Hitler quietly if he could see him in private. Hitler took him back to his apartment at No. 16, Prinzregentenplatz. Blomberg repeated what he had told Goebbels; and asked Hitler for permission to marry. The girl was of lowly origin, he said, but was that not what National Socialism was all about? Hitler trusted him, and gave permission.

Blomberg asked Hitler to be a witness at the wedding. It was the pebble which shortly started an avalanche.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HIMMLER, EVER the White Knight, would surely have welcomed the rescue of such a girl, but he and Marga were already in Bavaria. They had left Berlin on December 17 for

Christmas, after 'a terrible row' between her sister Berta and brother-in-law Hansi. 'Now we're sitting in the train,' Marga recorded in her diary, 'to spend Christmas at Gmund, and I am writing. Why on earth can't people keep their mouths shut? (Berta).' It seems that the Himmlers were not to be spared that Christmas ritual, the family row.

Marga killed some geese the next day. They went up for the holiday to the Obersalzberg where Hitler had his house, but Marga did not get on with Hitler's circle, the adjutants and secretaries; she grumbled until she returned to Gmund. 'Just back from Bormann's Obersalzberg,' she wrote on December 29. 'So that's got Christmas done and dusted. Got a lot of gifts but no rest except during sleep. Otherwise plenty of rows, anger, worries. When will it ever change?'

On January 5, 1938, Hitler sent for Himmler. 'H. had to see the Führer today,' Marga wrote. Two days later Himmler invited eleven of his staff to the lakeside villa at Gmund. 'Many visitors, and more on their way – or perhaps we'll leave early as there's something going on every day. And always this bother with the domestic help! Nobody does anything around the house.' She was turning into a shrew.

FAR TO THE NORTH, Blomberg was asking Göring to officiate as the other wedding witness. Reiterating that his fiancée was twenty-five, a typist, and not as high-born as became a 'Frau *Feldmarschällin*,' he added a singular request. There was a rival in the offing, one that he wanted sent far away. Relating this to an admiral in 1944, Göring described the man as a *Zuhälter*, or pimp. It seemed that Blomberg's days as war minister were over, and that Göring had the best chance of succeeding him. The rival was given a first-class ticket to Argentina. A telegram went to Buenos Aires asking the German legation to find him a job. Before leaving, the rival visited Göring to thank him, and added a trifle spitefully that the young lady had a 'past.'

In Berlin, there was a distant rumble; it could have been Homeric laughter, but in retrospect it sounded more like a coming avalanche – in which Himmler would have his part.

30: *Cavalcade*

CONFORMIST HISTORIANS state that what happened in Berlin over the first month of 1938 was stage-managed by Goring and Himmler, or at least by Heydrich, moving each piece as in a chess game. That there is no evidence to support this theory does not dismay them. Himmler still had to catch up on events, and Heydrich was as surprised as anyone by the cavalcade of misfortune.

On January 9, 1938 the Himmlers drove back north to Berlin – 'This eternal packing and unpacking,' grumbled Marga. 'How many days during the year are we on the road?'

In Berlin-Dahlem, their new official villa was still bustling with workmen. 'Everything is done so shoddily,' she wrote. The flower-garden made up for it; it was coming along nicely in the hands of their gardener-cum-janitor, living in the garden house out front. 'If only I did not need so much sleep,' she wrote on the eleventh, and she envied her husband's youthful energy.

Her diary does not mention any invitations on the twelfth, so the Himmler's were not invited to Göring's birthday luncheon that day, or to Field Marshal von Blomberg's quiet wedding ceremony in the war ministry that afternoon, at which Hitler and Göring were witnesses. Blomberg's mother passed away a few days later, perhaps in consequence. A photo taken at the funeral on the twentieth showed Blomberg's young wife at his side, dressed in black, her face veiled.

Himmler flew back to Berlin that day after a two-day trip to Sonthofen. 'H. should be arriving any moment,' wrote Marga in her diary. 'He came by plane from Munich. I was very worried.' He consumed a quick supper. 'We ate,' she continued, 'and I packed for him. He attended a meeting and left for Kiel, and then on to Munich' – for the opening of the Scientific Academy in the University of Kiel on January 21, and the architectural show in Munich the next day.

So Himmler was absent from Berlin during these crucial days.

THE PRESS HAD PRINTED A NOTICE about the wedding. It identified Blomberg's bride as Erna Gruhn. That name struck a chord among her friends. The ladies squealed with glee at how well Erna had done.

Shortly, *Kriminalkommissar* Christian Scholz phoned Dr Werner Best with disturbing news: the ladies were calling her 'one of theirs.' Best instructed Scholz to fetch the file-card from police headquarters (and to include file-cards on other 'G.'s,' as a smoke-screen).

Best told Heydrich. They handled the case like nitro-glycerine. Was it really the same lady? They left Heini in the dark. He was back at Dahlem at five p.m. on Saturday January 22, and took Marga to a reception at the Egyptian embassy that evening. 'Mostly foreign diplomats, very *nice*,' she wrote, her favourite adjective.

Heini had a quiet Sunday. She wished sometimes she had six children as good as Gudrun, rather than Gerhard, but for her those times were over. She saw a mass gymnastics display, and decided she would take that up too. Her husband humoured this new fad.

UNAWARE THAT AN EVEN bigger crisis than the botched Dollfuss kidnapping was about to land at his door, Himmler turned his attention briefly to another hobby-horse, alternative medicine. He took a lay interest in medical affairs, usually based on animal or genetic models. He knew a thing or two about animal breeding. His school-friend Dr Karl Gebhardt, chief doctor now at Hohenlychen, mocked that he was always hoping to make discoveries like a cure for tuberculosis, to say that while the academics were getting nowhere, he and his men had meanwhile found a cure. On January 14, he asked Gebhardt to look into a remedy which had been handed down for

generations 'in a family known to him.' 'With all our book-learning,' Heini said, 'we either didn't know much about old-fashioned medicine or had forgotten most of the old remedies.'

Suddenly however Himmler had more pressing business. The first waves of the Blomberg scandal were lapping at his door. What had happened was this: at four-fifteen p.m. on Friday January 21, Count Helldorff the police chief had taken the buff police folder on Erna Gruhn to Blomberg's war ministry. Blomberg was away at Eberswalde with his bride, so Helldorff saw Blomberg's right-hand man, General Keitel, instead. Helldorff showed the general the lady's change-of-address record – she had moved into Blomberg's apartment. Was this the new Frau von Blomberg? Keitel replied that he had seen her only at the mother's funeral. He suggested asking Göring.

It was naïve but well meant. Helldorff handed the folder over to Göring the next morning, complete with police file cards, fingerprint records and mug-shots (which we have seen). It contained a set of explicit photos taken in 1932 of Erna, then an eighteen-year-old runaway, by her Jewish boyfriend Löwinger, using a candle as accessory; he promised not to show them. Breaking the assurances, he at once peddled the pornographic photos round Berlin. She was arrested but released without charge; a 1934 file card stated that she had 'no criminal record.'

Erna had visited her mother – who ran a regular massage business at No. 40 Emser Strasse in Berlin's Neukölln district, on January 9, 1938, a note said – together with her future husband: 'And we all know who that is,' a police official had scrawled in the margin. Göring knew too, and retained the folder. He had the 'pimp' retrieved from Buenos Aires forthwith, and rehoused in a concentration camp.

HIMMLER, HEYDRICH, AND Heinrich Müller all denied knowing anything about the buff folder. Himmler said that this was what came of forbidding him to keep tabs on the generals. Heydrich drove straight round to Emser Strasse to check out the mother's massage-parlour; Luise Gruhn was legitimate and state-licensed. True, her wayward daughter was old enough to have known better than to model for that Jew's pornographic photos; but unless there was another file, she

was not the hooker that Göring (and all conformist historians since) believed. Göring had invited Blomberg to annul the marriage, but now Blomberg would clearly have to resign.

'JUST GOT A CALL,' exclaimed General Werner von Fritsch, the army's commander-in-chief, to his adjutant Curt Siewert after replacing the phone, looking grim. 'The field-marshal's married a hooker.'

When Hitler arrived back at the Chancellery late on January 24 he found Göring waiting, that buff police folder in his hands. Blomberg was refusing to resign. Hitler brooded all night on this dilemma; it was throwing all his plans into disarray. Göring was at Hitler's midday table next day, as was Goebbels, who cruelly hoped Blomberg would take the officer's way out, with a pistol. Choosing a less painful course, the field-marshal put the woman he loved first, abdicated office on January 27, and left on a world cruise paid for by Hitler.

'H.,' observed Marga, not fully understanding what was threatening Heinrich, 'has a load of worries, and still more on his plate.' Visiting her friend Countess Ida von Wedel, however, she picked up the gossip: 'Poor Blomberg. How sorry I am for him.'

Who should replace Blomberg? General von Fritsch was not averse to taking the job as war minister, though he later denied it. Nor was Himmler himself: improbably. He was barely thirty-seven and had never seen military action, he sensed an opportunity to leapfrog several squares in the Berlin power game. Göring too sat up and begged, sending his aide Karl Bodenschatz to canvass Hitler's adjutants; Hitler ruled Göring out of the question. He was too lazy. Goebbels suggested that Hitler take over himself. Goebbels hated Himmler – 'his entire being oozes sterility,' he had decided a few weeks before. 'He is a little man without an ounce of style. Ignore.'

Toward Blomberg, it must be said, Heini harboured no ill feelings. Six years later, publically reviewing the rottenness in the higher reaches of the German army, he skirted round Fritsch's name ('I can cut to the bottom line here') to dwell on Blomberg's qualities and his understandable flaws. 'He was soft,' he recalled, 'and not always able to get his own way. . . But he was decent and loyal to the Führer.'

Loyalty to the Führer: that was the currency which counted.

THE NAME OF VON FRITSCH, Blomberg's possible successor, struck a distant chord in Prinz-Albrechtsstrasse.

The name was known to Heydrich's *Kriminalkommissar* Josef Albert Meisinger, head of Section IIH. Meisinger was way below Heydrich's pay-grade, and he was not popular at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse; wounded in the war, he had fought in Epp's Freikorps and commanded a platoon of Freikorps Oberland in the 1923 Munich putsch. He was a year older than Himmler, but in 1933 he had served under him in the Munich political police with Heinrich Müller and Franz Josef Huber.

Meisinger currently headed IIH, the Gestapo's homosexuality section, and was building a card-index on every known homosexual. There was a card for Fritsch – a police report had mentioned Fritsch. In 1935 a petty criminal, Otto Schmidt, had been arrested for burglary. In an attempt to wriggle off the hook, Schmidt had told police interrogators that back in November 1933 he had witnessed a General von Fritsch engage in homosexual practices with a bum-boy named Martin Weingärtner. Masquerading as 'Detective-Inspector Kröger,' Schmidt had accosted him; whereupon the army officer had produced an army ID card and later paid him 2,500 marks, drawing the money from a bank in Lichterfelde. On January 15, 1938, just three days after the Blomberg wedding, a Gestapo officer had gone to Lichterfelde to check Fritsch's bank account. It seemed somebody had pulled the card, and was putting two and two together.

Brooding on his downfall three years later, Fritsch decided that Himmler was behind an odd episode at the end of March or early in April 1936. He wrote in his papers, which we have seen:

> I invited the Führer to do the army the honour of becoming honorary colonel of 9 Infantry Regiment at Potsdam. The Führer accepted, and the regiment was to march to Berlin for the purpose on April 20 [Hitler's birthday] . . . On April 19, Hossbach [Colonel Friedrich Hossbach, Hitler's adjutant] phoned that the Führer had withdrawn his agreement to become colonel of IR9.

The next day, he had sent Hitler a birthday telegram: 'The army and

I follow you in proud confidence and willing faith along the path you are mapping out ahead, into the future of Germany.' Writing on January 18, 1939, Fritsch commented bitterly: 'That was absolutely true at that time. Today I haven't any faith in the man.'

The blackmail episode had come to Himmler's attention at that time. It was manna from heaven. Eager to prove his diligence, he mentioned the Fritsch blackmail problem at the time of the Rhineland crisis in March 1936. But Himmler was still small fry, and Hitler needed Fritsch. 'General von Fritsch is without doubt hostile to National Socialism,' the Führer had said. 'But this is not the way to deal with it.' He ordered Himmler to burn the file on Otto Schmidt. 'Heydrich was pretty angry at that,' the *Gruppenführer*'s adjutant Hans-Hendrik Neumann recalled. To Heydrich, destroying a file was anathema. He winked as he passed the Hitler order on. The adjutant locked the file in his safe. Meisinger reminded him that Schmidt recalled the name as Fritsch, and identified him from photos.

Later in January 1938 it did not take any special expertise to see that somebody had made a mistake. The bank records proved it. It was an Achim von *Frisch*, a retired cavalry captain, who had paid off the blackmailer. Meisinger kept mum. So did his underling Fritz Fehling – Heydrich called him 'loathsome' – who handled the case.

Hitler had an elephantine memory for such things. He had excused Fritsch in 1936, but not forgotten him. Now he told Himmler to have those witnesses interrogated again, and the 'destroyed' file reconstituted. Heydrich said with another wink to his adjutant: 'Neumann, let's open your safe!' Schmidt had been jailed in 1936; he was produced to the Gestapo. On January 25 the 'reconstructed' file on Otto Schmidt went over to the Chancellery at midday. Hossbach slumped into a red leather sofa in the smoking-room, mouthed the word 'Fritsch,' and silently painted §175 in the air with his index finger – the German criminal-code paragraph on homosexuality.

Heinrich Himmler stayed out far into the night. Ignorant of this background, Marga wailed in her diary, 'How does he manage.'

IT SEEMED PRETTY damning. Hitler was minded to allow the general one last chance notwithstanding that it looked like a foregone

conclusion. Late on January 26, General von Fritsch was led into the library. Göring and Hitler awaited him; Himmler was not invited. There followed a famous scene described by Fritsch in his private notes, now in Moscow archives.

> I was eventually called in at about 8:30 p.m. The Führer announced to me that I had been accused of homosexual activities. He could understand everything, he said, but he wanted the truth. If I admitted the charges against me, I was to go on a long journey and nothing further would happen to me.

Foolishly forewarned by Colonel Hossbach about the terrible allegation, Fritsch deduced that it must refer to a disgruntled Hitler Youth he had been feeding in line with Party policy. 'Mein Führer,' he stammered, 'this can only be a reference to that Hitler Youth affair!'

That fell somewhat short of the indignant denial Hitler had wanted. Was there no limit to the general's victims? He handed Fritsch the Otto Schmidt file. The general looked and reddened. It was meaty stuff. 'Göring acted,' he said the next day, 'as though there were plenty of other things in the files as well.' Otto Schmidt himself was brought in; he pointed at Fritsch: 'That's the one.' Fritsch seemed doomed:

> I gave the Führer my word of honour that I had nothing to do with this affair whatever. Confronted with the allegations of a habitual criminal it was brushed aside as of no consequence.
>
> I was ordered to report to the Gestapo next morning, where I would be told more. I demanded a thorough investigation to clear it all up beyond a shadow of doubt. Deeply shaken at the abruptness displayed by the Führer and Göring toward me, I went home and told Major Siewert . . . I also informed General Beck. I mentioned that it might be best for me to shoot myself, in view of the unheard-of insult from the Führer. Both these gentlemen argued against such a step, and I had to agree with them: the Führer and the people influencing him would have seen in my suicide the final and welcome proof that I was guilty.

'It's one man's word against another –' wrote Goebbels, but added words which showed whom he believed: '– the word of a homosexual blackmailer, against that of the army's commander-in-chief.'

HEYDRICH COULD NOT hand over a four-star general, the army's commander-in-chief, to be interrogated by an ordinary police officer. He directed Dr Werner Best, a *Ministerialdirigent*, to question him.

Together with Heydrich's other adjutant, Kurt Pomme, Dr Best received Fritsch courteously at the street door. He reminded Fritsch that they were of the same rank in government hierarchy, and hinted that if there was anything which *Herr General* wished to tell him privately, this was the time. Shifting his monocle from one eye to the other, Fritsch swept past him. The transcript of the two-and-a-half hour interrogation reveals his fury at the charges. 'It's strange,' he exclaimed more than once, 'that my word should count for less than that of this scoundrel. . . 'I must admit,' said Fritsch, 'that if pressure has been brought to bear on him to tell a lie, then he's doing it damnably cleverly.' The microphone recorded his sad comment: 'One thing does seem clear – that it was at least an officer involved.'

The Gestapo had hidden Schmidt's two homosexual accomplices in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse to watch: Weingärtner stated flatly that this officer had *not* been his 'client' in November 1933; the other, Bücker, was uncertain. Like police forces the world over, the Gestapo kept such inconvenient details to itself. 'If the Führer had only been told of these two facts,' Fritsch wrote, 'then his decision would surely have been very different, in view of the word of honour I had given him.'

WERNER BEST WAS SATISFIED, BUT NOT HIMMLER. Himmler felt that Best had been too soft, particularly when General von Fritsch angrily demanded a full court of honour to clear his name. There was no other evidence against Fritsch, just an egregious avoidance of female company. Goebbels recorded: 'Fritsch is taking it all on the chin.' Himmler argued with Dr Best all one evening, convinced that Fritsch was guilty. When Best called the blackmailer Schmidt a liar, Himmler sneered about 'honour among thieves' – meaning homosexuals. He and Heydrich told Dr Best that there was no smoke

without fire; they were trusting him to sniff it out. Karl Wolff agreed. In Allied custody later he spoke of the 'sworn evidence available that Fritsch, a well-known bachelor, was a homosexual.'

He spun this muddled patchwork of half-truths to fellow prisoners:

> This evidence, which was irrefutable, was shown by the Reichsführer personally to the Führer. The Führer then ordered that the evidence should be destroyed. . . The Reichsführer and Heydrich obeyed him. A little later the order came to start proceedings against Fritsch, and an attempt was then made to reconstruct the case from memory, but of course it was naturally incomplete. It was well-known that Fritsch had done all kinds of sadistic and masochistic things, but nothing could be done now because the Reichsführer had faithfully carried out the original order to destroy the evidence against him.

Alfred Leitgen, the adjutant of Rudolf Hess, stated that Heydrich was the real force behind the campaign. 'His hatred of this officer-class and his own ambition were boundless.' And: 'There are witnesses alive today who are in a position to certify that while the Frisch–Fritsch case was flawed, the §175 allegation as such was not.' The more entrenched the rival positions became, the deeper Himmler dug himself in. On January 30 Goebbels found Himmler very depressed in the Reich Chancery: 'Fritsch has still not confessed, so who is right here? This can't go on. Something's got to happen. . . It is wearing us all out. Heydrich has interrogated him several nights long. Fritsch listens to what is said, but refuses to give in. Now I just don't know.'

Berlin, decked out in flags for the fifth anniversary of Hitler's accession to power, was buzzing with rumours. The top brass were jostling with each other for the promotional plums likely to come out of all this. A parade of hopefuls traipsed up to Hitler's chambers. 'Talks with the Führer,' wrote Victor Lutze, the Brownshirts' chief, in his own diary entry that afternoon, January 30.

> Göring, Himmler, Gürtner [minister of justice] . . . and a few others go in to see the Führer together or alone. Toward six-thirty

> p.m. as I'm going in to see him about this evening's torchlight parade, the three above-named gents are just coming out of the Führer's apartment. From their words I gather that the "business" is now settled. I take the torchlight parade on the balcony next to the Führer – but without von Fritsch.

Hitler could no longer wait for a court of honour to resolve the guilt or innocence of General von Fritsch. During the evening, Lutze's diary continued, the rumours that von Fritsch was done for multiplied, and that Göring or Himmler was to take up Blomberg's empty post as war minister. Goebbels suggested a reshuffle, and Hitler warmed to the idea: he could replace his worn-out foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath. To his adjutants, he remarked: 'I've got a very bitter pill to swallow today, I must ask the baron to offer me his resignation.' 'Baron' could have referred to either Fritsch or Neurath. He walked across the Chancellery garden to visit Neurath. 'The damage that one woman can do!' commented Goebbels in his diary, adding the hasty distinction: 'And that *kind* of woman too.'

Moving his pawns into position for the reshuffle, Hitler recalled the Ribbentrops from the London embassy. The Himmlers invited them to their Dahlem villa for the night. Sure that Heini would be getting good news any day now, Marga wrote: 'Everything went well.' Later, she wrote discreetly: 'Heard a lot of interest. H. very stressed out. I wait to see each day's newspaper.' Heinrich was convinced of Fritsch's guilt, and baffled by the lack of supporting evidence. His security police called in the general's landlady, chauffeurs, and valets for interrogation: still nothing. Telegrams of foreign diplomats intercepted by the *Forschungsamt* showed a rising hubbub.

All the threads of this crisis came together on February 3, and Hitler pulled them tight. He asked Fritsch to resign. 'I accepted this demand,' the general wrote, 'as I could never have worked with this man again.' He accepted that Hitler believed him guilty, but believed the SS in general and Himmler and Heydrich in particular had staged a cynical plot: 'I don't think the Führer knew in advance of Himmler's foul trick, or sanctioned it – he made far too frantic an impression on the evening of January 26 for that' – that was the

library confrontation with Otto Schmidt. On the fourth, Hitler signed a letter to the general, accepting Fritsch's resignation 'in view of your failing health.' He completed his reshuffle, evidently no longer needing input from others; Heini was home at nine p.m. that evening, earlier than usual, and settled down to bridge with Marga.

The next day, February 5, Hitler called the generals to the war ministry at four p.m. and spoke to them for two hours, in Himmler's absence, mercilessly setting out the allegations which had resulted in the resignations of both Blomberg and Fritsch.

THUS THE REICHSFÜHRER INADVERTENTLY helped Hitler to absolute power. At eight p.m. Hitler held his Cabinet's last meeting ever. He announced that General Walther von Brauchitsch, comparatively unknown, would replace Fritsch, while he himself replaced Blomberg as minister of war and commander-in-chief. To General Keitel, whom he inherited from Blomberg, Hitler confided that he was planning to do something that would make all Europe 'catch its breath.' He hinted it involved Austria. Himmler, who had dabbled in diplomacy, received no reward. (In 1937 he had sent SS *Standartenführer* Dr Herbert Mehlhorn to the USA to report on their Jewish and African-American problems, and to suggest ways of bringing the Germans living there back to Germany.)

To be passed over for promotion is a sorrow that only the failed candidate can appreciate. Marga felt it deeply: 'Big news: the Führer has taken over the Wehrmacht himself. Ribbentrop's become foreign minister.' 'Lots of other changes,' Marga added in her diary, adding the comment: 'H. is very nervy. Day and night he's had to help this along, but he has not been promoted himself.' Four days elapsed before she wrote that his nerves were better 'and he has calmed down.'

He felt cheated, and was not alone. Admiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg flattered Himmler six years later that he had taken it for granted that he would get the promotion. In retrospect it is hard to see what Hitler could have given the young man: he already commanded the police, the SS, and the Gestapo. As things shortly turned out, Himmler should in fact have resigned, had there been a regime in Berlin based on ministerial responsibility and the concept we know

as Crichel Down. Perhaps we hear the sigh of History: Himmler was left where he was, as Reichsführer SS, with no ministry for the next five years.

FOR A FEW DAYS he turned to other matters, as did Hitler: he attended a reception for a thousand guests at Konstantin Hierl's on February 11, and called on the French ambassador on the twelfth. Marga found André François-Poncet 'quite the funniest, most amusing person I have ever met.' They had a quiet Sunday at home, playing bridge. They had to leave early, as a chronic cold had gripped this perennially ailing wife, and the medication made her drowsy.

Down in Berchtesgaden on February 12 Hitler was staging his theatrical confrontation with Kurt Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, forcing upon him, with much sabre-rattling, an improved *modus vivendi*; he would do the same later with Edvard Beneš of Czechoslovakia. On February 15 the Austrian government ratified the 'Berghof Agreement,' which ended Vienna's persecution of National Socialists and gave Berlin a say in Austrian affairs. That evening the Himmlers were at the Führer's reception for the diplomatic corps, around 200 guests in all their finery. 'Gorgeous flowers,' recorded Marga. 'The Führer looked very well, but flagged toward the end. We had a good time.' Göring shook hands with Stephan Tauschitz, the Austrian envoy, and assured him, 'A new epoch is beginning.'

With Göring, now a field-marshal, Himmler still got on well, but he and his wife had to socialise with the Goebbelses on February 19, and Marga found it all very boring. 'We left early. H. was also very tired.' Himmler was biding his time with the silver-tongued propaganda minister: he was building a dossier. Helldorff, the trouble-making police chief, warned Goebbels that Heydrich was infiltrating agents into his ministry: 'When I became police chief of Berlin,' Helldorff advised earlier, while Himmler was away visiting Libya, 'I removed from my staff every SS officer who was working for the *Sicherheitsdienst*.' Goebbels spluttered in his diary about Himmler and his 'Gestapo methods and snooping,' adding: 'I'll have no part of it. Going my own way –,' he cursed, and he added an expletive.

Himmler spent the afternoon of February 20 with Marga; she

wrote that Heini was doing more 'cultivation' in their garden. In a 'gigantic' Reichstag speech that day Hitler praised the Austrian chancellor for his statesmanship. Heini sat downstairs sipping tea with the menfolk, while Marga wrote the diary upstairs, and went off for a girls' night out. Himmler fled this disconcerting Berlin world of women and headed off to Bavaria, where the Party was celebrating its annual February 25 foundation ceremony, and they arrived home in Gmund on Sunday evening after that, February 27; he came with the Heissmeyers – SS *Obergruppenführer* August Heissmeyer was chief of the SS Main Office. They saw a lot of Ribbentrop, now he was foreign minister. When Goebbels raised the topic of Ribbentrop's 'megalomania,' he found Hess 'solidly on my side,' but not Himmler. They drove over to Harlaching for tea with Ilse and Rudolf Hess; the Hesses showed off young Wolf-Rüdiger, now three months old. Marga always felt tired, 'mostly sleeping' during these days of sunshine at Lindenfycht. On Monday she slaughtered another pig, 120 pounds of pork and squeal, and felt the better for it.

THE NOISES FROM Berlin drowned those from Gmund. To Himmler's further annoyance, the army convened a court of honour to try the case of General von Fritsch. Himmler told Goebbels he had constructed a dossier on Fritsch. The general had instructed a leading defence counsel, Count Rüdiger von der Goltz.

Goltz? The Gestapo at once objected that according to their card index, the blackmailer had shaken him down too. But that was an error, he had confused him with a Herbert Goltz. Prompted by this, the army investigated the bank in Lichterfelde. On March 2, General Walter Heitz, a venerable judge twenty-two years Himmler's senior, located Achim von Frisch's bank account. They had found Otto Schmidt's real victim; the cavalry captain bravely admitted the homosexual felony and even produced a receipt for the 2,500 marks which Schmidt had signed (as 'Detective Kröger'). Frisch mentioned that the Gestapo had already checked that account on January 15. It looked bad.

HIMMLER WAS BACK in Berlin. 'Heini here on Tuesday [March 1] to

face much ado,' wrote Marga. She lay sleepless each night until he came back from the office. She had no idea of the mess his secret police had created. 'He is too tired and stressed, what with all the fuss. I keep telling myself he doesn't get the recognition, and rack my brain as to why. Are his enemies as powerful as that? Heini is contented, and keeps a stiff upper lip, and I try to do the same.'

Goebbels discussed the security service with Lutze, Helldorff, and Karl Hanke. 'They tell me horror stories about Himmler's secret service. According to them we're surrounded by one vast system of informers. . . The methods used against Fritsch are not very honourable. Scarcely anything can be proved against him. They shouldn't have dragged the Führer into this.' On March 3 Heitz laid the damning bank-account evidence before Hitler. Himmler helplessly objected that there were two separate cases, Fritsch and Frisch. The blackmailer Otto Schmidt himself had identified the general, he pointed out, and he ordered the cavalry captain Achim von Frisch arrested, as he had confessed to homosexual felonies. Heitz quietly persisted: there was no evidence against Fritsch. Himmler spluttered dissent, but Hitler admonished, 'Reichsführer, the general's right.'

The Gestapo went into full damage-control. They moved Otto Schmidt to a cell at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse and made him swear an affidavit that the Fritsch and Frisch episodes were quite different. 'The Führer is worried about the Fritsch case,' wrote Goebbels on March 6. 'It's not going smoothly at all.' On the seventh, General Hans-Jürgen Stumpff, chief of air staff, related 'the latest on the innocence of Fritsch,' as General Milch noted. Later, Heydrich's adjutant Neumann said that Himmler summoned his staff for something like a seance, a joint meditation by candlelight. The facts were overwhelming.

THE FRITSCH COURT OF HONOUR began at ten a.m. on March 10. Göring swaggered in, flourishing his new field-marshal's baton, and took his seat as court president. Admiral Erich Raeder, chief of the Navy, General Walther von Brauchitsch, and two judges flanked him on the bench. Decorated with rows of medals, General Werner von Fritsch came to attention before him, monocle in place. Göring was unwilling to give the general any quarter, even now.

> Göring [wrote Fritsch afterward] denied my defence attorney's motion for the blackmailer to be transferred from Gestapo custody to that of the Ministry of the Interior so as to remove him from the baleful influence of the Gestapo. Himmler, he said, might take it as a sign of a lack of confidence.

It was one of the bleakest points in Himmler's career. He could only hope for a miracle, and thanks to Hitler that happened. The next morning, before the court resumed, Göring heaved himself to his feet, and announced that the trial was adjourned. It was something affecting the interests of the Reich, he said. Something had come up.

THE TRIAL OF General von Fritsch resumed seven days later, on March 17, and collapsed.

Göring, as presiding judge, launched into a cross-examination of the blackmailer. 'How much longer,' he bawled at Otto Schmidt, 'do you imagine you can keep on lying to the court?'

'OK – it was a lie,' Schmidt crudely conceded, lapsing into the coarse Berlin dialect.

'And why did you lie? If you tell the truth now, you have my word that no harm will come to you.'

'This morning,' explained Schmidt, '*Kriminalrat* Meisinger sent for me and said that if I didn't stick to the story, then –' and he jerked a thumb upward.

'What d'you mean – *then*?' Göring jerked his thumb too.

'Then it's the high jump for me!' said Schmidt, completing the sentence, with the appropriate throat-slashing mime.

> Initially [wrote Fritsch privately] I had the impression that Göring wanted a verdict of *non liquet*, not proven – in other words that my guilt had not been established, but was still possible.
>
> But under the weight of evidence, even Göring had to announce that nobody endowed with even the slightest intelligence could fail to be convinced of my innocence.

'The whole thing seems to be a case of mistaken identity,' Goebbels

wrote with relish. 'Very nasty, above all for Himmler.' Goebbels called it a 'terrible slapping-down.' Göring boasted to Dr Werner Best 'with all the pride of a layman' about how he had 'caught Schmidt out.' Fritsch was rather less grateful to Göring. On the day after the verdict, he wrote to his lawyer: 'Whether and to what extent the Führer will allow me to be rehabilitated still remains to be seen. I fear he will resist it with all his might.' As he pointed out,

> both before the end of the examination of the witnesses and while reading out the tribunal's verdict, Göring took pains to justify the Gestapo's actions. . . Göring repudiated the fine words spoken by Count von der Goltz about the army and myself. . . Throughout it all you could hear the *leitmotif*, 'Thank God we've got rid of him and he can't come back.' Göring kept referring to me with emphasis as 'Colonel-General von Fritsch (retired).'

Fritsch believed that it was Himmler, this young whipper-snapper in the sharp Hugo Boss uniform, who had engineered his ouster. He drafted a twelve-point list of facts, making his case. 'The entire attitude of the Gestapo throughout this affair has proven that its sole concern was to brand me as the guilty Party.' At the end of the month he set them out in a letter to the Reichsführer, ending with these extraordinary words (the document with his other papers is in the Moscow archives): '. . . I therefore challenge you to a duel with pistols.' Again it is tempting to hear the sigh of History. A duel could have gone either way: the general spent the next days practising with a pistol and perfecting his aim, but Himmler too was no mean shot.

The story became widely known. Victor Lutze wrote in his diary: '[Fritsch] challenges Himmler to a duel with pistols, but the Führer has allegedly vetoed it. Army in a foul mood against Himmler, who is regarded as being behind the whole thing.' The letter remained undelivered anyway.

Casting about for a seconder to deliver the challenge, Fritsch's choice fell first on General Ludwig Beck, the army's over-venerated chief of staff, and then on General Gerd von Rundstedt, the army's most senior general. Both demurred.

In private Himmler protested his innocence to Rosenberg. While the Reichsführer remained stubbornly unrepentant, Hitler wrote to the wronged general a rare letter of apology on his Gold-embossed notepaper, on March 31 (it too is in the Moscow file). In June 1938, he secretly addressed the army's top generals and, visibly embarrassed, exonerated their former commander-in-chief. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I was the victim of a very regrettable error.' He continued: 'The allegations against General von Fritsch were not malicious fabrications. A minor official blundered – that's all.'

In the summer of 1942 Himmler was still holding the blackmailer in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, but the medics certified him as a schizophrenic and unfit to serve further time. Goebbels conceded that Fritsch had comported himself 'impeccably' throughout.

THE ARMY'S NEW C.-in-C., General von Brauchitsch, reported Hitler's secret speech to Fritsch soon after. Fritsch was not satisfied:

> Either the Führer sees to it that law and order prevail again in Germany [he wrote that summer] and that people like Himmler and Heydrich get their deserts, or he will continue to cover for the misdeeds of these people – in which case I fear for the future.
>
> Since the Führer has sanctioned and condoned the way the Gestapo acted in my case, I must regretfully abandon my plan to challenge Himmler to a duel. Besides, after so much time has elapsed it would probably look somewhat affected.
>
> What I cannot understand and never will is the Führer's attitude toward me. Perhaps he personally begrudges me that, by being acquitted, I dented his aura of infallibility.

The Blomberg–Fritsch scandal which had begun with a funeral, that of Ludendorff, ended with one too. Entering Warsaw as 'colonel' of his regiment on September 22, 1939, Fritsch was cut down by a burst of Polish machine-gun fire.

Himmler was with Hitler when word of the fatality was brought. Flying back afterwards Hitler was sunk in thought. 'I won't forget it,' wrote an eye-witness.

DID HIMMLER BELIEVE in God? That January 1938 Himmler preserved what Hitler had said on the subject, marking it, 'Words of the Führer.'

'We National Socialists are Believers, deep in our hearts. If now somebody asks, how do you picture God, we offer this reply: Among the many peoples of the world, there is no uniform picture of God. But perhaps the most exalted notion is that we never just consider the external appearance, but also the question of Why, and How, and Wherefore, etc.; and this entire world, which is so clear to us in its external appearance, is equally vague about its destination.

'Here is where the human race – and that is what elevates it above the animal world – humbly bows to the conviction that there is an immense Almighty, a mighty power, which is so vast and so profound that we humans are not capable of comprehending it. And before this Almighty the human bends his knee; and that is a good thing, because when times are bad it can only comfort.

'And above all, we avoid that common pride, that self-conceit, which too easily seduces the human to imagine that he rules the world, while in fact he is a tiny bacillus on this earth, in this universe.

'That might lead him to the liberal reading of the past century which says that Man determines the laws of nature. No, he studies them, at best, and often he grasps a tiny portion of them or imagines he grasps them. But the fact that he grasps them, that is no thanks to him. That too has been given him. He is just a being who has been sent, and now fulfils this mission which has been given him.

'We can see Matter: who created it, we don't know. We can possibly even believe we know the laws according to which this Matter is formed. But who created the laws, that is something we don't know. And because we don't know this, let us humbly bend a knee before Him, the Almighty one who created it.'

31: *No More Mr Nice Guy*

WHAT HAD INTERRUPTED the Fritsch Trial proceedings was unexpected news from Austria.

Hitler had anticipated a slow evolutionary absorption of his native country, and in July 1937 he had appointed one of Himmler's honorary SS generals, the economist Wilhelm Keppler, to follow Austrian affairs. At midday on March 9, 1938 however the agencies brought to Hitler the startling news that Schuschnigg had called a snap referendum on his Berghof agreement, to be held in just four days' time. All bets were off. The vote would be rigged – the question was framed in such a way that anybody voting No could be arrested as a traitor. It was the kind of thing the National Socialists might have thought of themselves. Hitler decided to seize this opportunity – he called it a 'stupid and crass plebiscite' – by military means. 'He believes the hour has come,' Goebbels recorded in his diary. 'Just wants to sleep on it. Says that Italy and Britain won't do anything.'

General Keitel sent for an old file on CASE OTTO, a theoretical military invasion of Austria, and Hitler sent for General Ludwig Beck, chief of the general staff. Beck lamely protested. 'I cannot take any responsibility for this.' Hitler replied that the responsibility would be his alone. As he had once before, at the time of the Rhineland operation in March 1936, he threatened to use the SS instead, saying,

'They will march in with bands playing.' He ordered Beck to have two army corps standing by on Saturday the twelfth. Beck's conference with Hitler had lasted five minutes.

Many generals agreed with Beck, and even the Austrian SA *Obergruppenführer* Reschny predicted bloodshed. Hitler disagreed. At four a.m. that Friday, March 11, behind a security cordon thrown round the printing works by Heydrich, Goebbels started printing leaflets to be scattered over Austria. SS *Obersturmführer* Dr Helmut Knochen recorded a meeting of department heads for a 'special operation' – all leave cancelled, full SS uniform with breeches and jackboots for all staff, and the immediate updating of all Austrian arrest lists. Heydrich created an *Einsatzkommando*, a task force, with orders to secure government buildings: there were still matters of history that Himmler wanted looked into.

From a phone booth in the Chancellery, Göring began barking orders down a bad line to the legation in Vienna. He packed off Keppler with a list of Austrians who would form the new Austrian Cabinet. SS *Brigadeführer* Ernst Kaltenbrunner, a scarfaced thirty-four-year-old lawyer, would take over the Austrian security forces. Göring spoke with a Trieste-born Austrian, Odilo Globocnik, shortly to be named Gauleiter of Vienna, and told him to throw out the country's newspaper chiefs and replace them by 'our men.' We shall meet Globocnik later. Göring dictated to him the new ministers: 'Justice ministry, that's straightforward. You know who gets that.'

GLOBOCNIK: Ja, ja!
GÖRING: Well, say the name.
GLOBOCNIK: Ja, your brother-in-law, right?
GÖRING: Right.

AT EIGHT-THIRTY P.M. HITLER SLAPPED his thigh and decided. 'All right. Let's go!' He had ordered three regiments of SS troops to join in. General Heinz Guderian suggested he decorate the tanks of their invasion force with flags and flowers. As darkness fell, on Göring's orders Kaltenbrunner began putting a cordon of five hundred Austrian SS men round the Federal Chancellery building in Vienna.

To preserve appearances, Himmler went to the Luftwaffe's Winter Ball that evening. 'There was a huge orchestra from the opera,' reported the U.S. chargé d'affaires next day, 'the best singers in Germany, the best dancers gathered together, supper and wines were of superlative quality.' Göring made a late but dramatic entrance, to a shrill trumpet fanfare. An unseen tension held the building as he took his No. 2, General Milch, aside and murmured, 'We go in at dawn.' The officers and their ladies whirled around the ballroom: 'There was apparent on every German face,' wrote the American, 'a mighty satisfaction and intense pride of power.'

Toward midnight Göring promised the Prague envoy Vojtěch Mastný that neighbouring Czechoslovakia had little to fear. Mastný forwarded this to his president, Dr Edvard Beneš, who undertook not to mobilise. 'Good,' said Göring. 'The Führer has put me in charge – he's going elsewhere for a short time.' Elsewhere was Austria.

Heini had not breathed a word about Austria to Marga. She had caught wind that something was up when he asked her to pack his field-grey. She was seized by forebodings, which grew only louder as he vanished for several days after this.

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR passed. It was March 12, 1938. Göring's bombers were taking off, their racks laden with Goebbels's leaflets. The Austrian president had nominated the lawyer Artur Seyss-Inquart to replace Schuschnigg. Daluege's regular police, *Ordnungspolizei*, would follow close behind the army. At two-thirty a.m., Göring learned that Himmler was about to fly down to Vienna, ahead of any troops. Göring did not want Himmler or Heydrich getting control of wiretapping and phoned instructions ahead to Seyss-Inquart: 'He wants you to take over their wiretapping agencies right away, okay?'

It was three a.m., hours later than planned, when Himmler, wearing the new field-grey, took off from Berlin. He landed toward five a.m., long before dawn, at Vienna's Aspern airport together with Heydrich and fifty SS men. The men set up machine-gun posts to secure the area. Himmler had told them that the army would cross the frontier at eight a.m. In addition to Heydrich, Himmler had brought Walter Schellenberg and Heinrich Müller as inspectors,

and Franz Josef Huber and Heinz Jost with him. On the airfield he was met by Kaltenbrunner, who wore a rare grin, and a less comfortable State-Secretary Dr Michael Skubl, the Viennese police chief and security minister, whom Schuschnigg had appointed after the shooting of Dollfuss in 1934. Together with Keppler's point man SS *Standartenführer* Edmund Veesenmayer they had shivered on the airfield since midnight.

As daylight came, the Eighth Army and its supporting SS troops pushed aside the frontier barriers and charged into Austria. Three hundred transport planes were already ferrying troops deep into the country. Hitler crossed the River Inn into Braunau five minutes before four p.m., as all the frontier town's church bells pealed a welcome. A few minutes later he was passing the house where he was born. The Second Panzer Division made straight for Vienna; truckloads of Daluege's police entered at Passau and headed for the capital too.

In Berlin, Göring phoned Mastný, Prague's envoy, to promise that troops would leave a buffer zone ten miles clear of the Czech frontier. To Stephan Tauschitz, the Austrian envoy, he mocked that he had missed him at last night's Winter Ball.

'Where is the Führer?' replied the Austrian.

'He's gone,' bellowed Göring, savouring the moment. 'He's gone where he's not been allowed to go for twenty years: to visit his parents' grave in Austria.'

ONCE AGAIN, JUST as in March 1936, Hitler had confounded his doubting army generals. Not a shot was fired by either side; crowds of Austrians bearing flowers greeted the 'invaders.' (U.S. documents show that from the newsreels prepared for the later trials the O.S.S. expunged all the scenes of enthusiasm in the Rhineland, Austria, and later the Sudeten territories, which rather nullified their case.) Himmler entered the Vienna Chancellery toward nine a.m. and instructed Glaise von Horstenau, the country's new minister of the interior, to tell Skubl, if he had not already guessed it, that he was fired. 'He is quite unacceptable to us,' said Himmler. In Berlin that day Marga Himmler had a tea Party with Countess Ida von Wedel: 'There was tension in the air, although nobody really knew what was

going on.' Her friends stayed all evening, as the news broke – Hitler's army and SS units had debouched over the frontier into Austria, and the Führer himself was at that moment heading for Linz where Heini, her young husband, was waiting for him. 'H. knew all along what was happening, and he was in a good mood and high spirits.'

Himmler reached Linz shortly after five p.m. and spoke from a balcony of City Hall. 'I want to tell you all how happy and proud we are that this piece of German soil which gave us the Führer Adolf Hitler is now free and has returned for the first time in centuries to our great German homeland.' He ended with the words, 'So it will be now and ever more: One Führer, one Nation, one Reich.' It sounded stilted, but it caught the mood. Months later, Himmler boasted that it was he who devised that slogan: *Ein Volk! Ein Reich! Ein Führer!*

Standing upright in his open car, Hitler arrived in their midst toward 7:30 p.m. His Mercedes throbbed and surged slowly through thick crowds lining the streets. Hysterical fellow-Austrians carpeted the road into Linz with flowers. The crowd, now hundreds of thousands strong, cheered itself hoarse. In Berlin, far to the north, Marga clung to the radio until two a.m. Hitler was speaking to Linz: 'If Providence once despatched me from this fine city, and called upon me to lead the Reich, then surely it had some mission in mind for me.' His words were broadcast throughout Germany – throughout the world. He dined in Linz that evening, March 12, with Seyss-Inquart and Keppler. Here he would spend the night.

'People are weeping,' Göring, back at Carinhall, related to a telephone caller. 'Just one great outburst of joy from everybody, give or take a few panicky Jews and other guilt-stricken gentlemen.'

Caught up in the excitement, more than a few Jews, unseeing the horrors still to come, cheered alongside their fellow-Germans. Among them was Willi Cohn, a Breslau schoolteacher and historian. He was just fifty and, because of the Nuremberg Laws, now out of work: 'You can't help being astounded,' he wrote, 'at the energy with which all this has been carried out.' We shall glimpse him briefly once again – but only once. Official world opinion, published world opinion, was apoplectic, but the nations were powerless. The scenes of excitement were not without effect on Himmler: he had seen a

Messiah returning to restore his country – the prelude to all else that the Führer had been planning since his imprisonment in Landsberg fifteen years before.

HITLER RESTED in Linz that Sunday, March 13. During the afternoon he was able to pay that private visit to his revered parents' grave in nearby Leonding. (The gravesite, always decked with humble flowers and oft-photographed by tourists, would be erased in 2012 by a local cleric, claiming 'permission' from a remote descendant of the family.)

Perhaps his mother's long-forgotten voice whispered to Adolf from beneath that holy sod. Until now he had envisaged an autonomous Austria under his own elected presidency, and a gradual reunification; but as he returned to Linz a new idea took shape. Could Austria not now proclaim outright union with the Reich – '*Anschluss*?' He passed that thought to Seyss-Inquart. The startling news filtered up to Berlin, where Ribbentrop had flown from London and was visiting Göring. The *Forschungsamt*, still tapping the Austrian legation's telephones, heard Vienna telephoning Tauschitz with the news – Seyss-Inquart's Cabinet had of course endorsed Hitler's suggestion.

The resulting Brown Page shocked Göring. Annex Austria, just like that? Ribbentrop phoned the legation to inquire. Göring tore the phone out of his hand: 'What the hell is going on?'

'Austria is now part of the German Reich,' recorded Marga Himmler. 'H. [Heini] was the first to arrive in Vienna. The cheers of joy were indescribable when the Führer arrived in Braunau on Saturday. . . Now the triumphal entry continues to Vienna.' 'We women are sitting here and must console ourselves with the radio.'

That Sunday, Himmler put through a call from Vienna. 'He is well,' wrote Marga, 'and overwhelmed by all that's happening.'

Their excited daughter Gudrun, now eight, lay awake with a fever. 'It's only three-thirty,' Marga chided the restless infant. 'You must try to get some sleep.' 'Three-thirty,' echoed Gudrun. 'This time last night Daddy went marching in!' – into Vienna, she meant.

HEINI PHONED THEM again on Monday, March 14. His wife chattered about her plans for bridge with the Oswalds, a diplomat, and Wedels

that evening, and made small-talk about how she was putting on weight – 158 pounds (72 kilos) already. Himmler had larger concerns. The Führer was due to arrive in Vienna that day. Goebbels had flown in tons of swastika flags and Hitler would address an adoring multitude. It sounded like a security nightmare, but Himmler, Heydrich, and Kaltenbrunner had everything buttoned up: their enemies were stampeding towards the country's exits. Kaltenbrunner banned the hated rubber-truncheon throughout Austria, just as in Germany. German uniforms were issued to Austria's police and SS.

Watching the joint military parade through the capital on the fifteenth Himmler felt invulnerable. SS *Obergruppenführer* Heissmeyer had gone down sick, and Heini summoned Dr Karl Gebhardt to join them in Vienna. Gebhardt would become Himmler's 'travelling physician' on these forays as the Reich expanded.

Himmler remained in Austria for a few more days. On the sixteenth, as the adjourned Fritsch trial was reopening in Berlin, Himmler took the salute with General Fedor von Bock, commander of the Eighth Army, at his side, as Vienna's police were sworn in on Hitler. In his speech he commended those who had soldiered on for the SS and SA under Schuschnigg's dictatorial 'System' regime, and particularly 89 SS Regiment (*Standarte*); he urged the 7,500 police officers present to put all differences aside and work for the future. Their aim must be, his regular theme, 'to become the friend and helper of the common man.' He laid a wreath the next day at the graves of Hackl, Maitzen, Wohlrab, Planetta, Domes, Holzweber, Feike, Leeb, Saureis, Unterberger, und Schrett, the SS men executed after the botched killing of Dollfuss in 1934.

AUSTRIA HAD BEEN just the appetiser. As Hitler flew back to Berlin on the eighteenth, he leaned across the aisle to General Keitel and pointed to that morning's *Völkischer Beobachter*. It carried a small map of the new Reich frontiers. Smiling broadly, he clasped finger and thumb together over Czechoslovakia. Hitler secretly informed selected Party leaders that Czechoslovakia would be next; and he would invite Poland and Hungary to partake in the feast of dismemberment.

Himmler too headed back to Berlin. The army newspaper *Die Wehrmacht* carried a flattering piece about his nocturnal flight into Vienna. Marga recorded that he talked 'very little' – 'he was nervously exhausted.'

Hitler addressed the Reichstag at eight p.m. 'The Führer spoke movingly,' wrote Marga afterwards, notching up her language slightly; she listened on the radio. 'The Führer was tired and stressed out.' Hitler invited the new Austrian leadership to dine in the Chancellery afterwards. Marga, not invited, recorded that thousands waited outside, chanting, 'Hermann Göring be a sport, go and bring the Führer out!' (in German, it rhymes); and 'Führer ours, don't act so hard; show yourself with Seyss-Inquart.'

Sucked into the toils of History, Seyss-Inquart too was destined for an American master-sergeant's noose.

Heini listened with half an ear to what Marga had to say; he promised they would all go down to Gmund for Easter. 'H. flew back to Austria again,' she wrote on March 21: '[He says] he'll be home even less than usual.' At four-thirty p.m. he and Heydrich landed at Klagenfurt airport to inspect the local SS regiments. He flew on to Graz, and at 8:45 a.m. the next day to Innsbruck aboard his Junkers 52 'Otto Kissenberth' – named for a world war fighter ace, one of only three who wore eye-glasses. He flew from Salzburg to Linz on March 22, arriving at the stadium at 3:55 p.m. to inspect 1,667 men of the local SS regiment, and told them of Hitler's plans to expand the SS. On March 23 Marga noted: 'H. has not called yet.' On his return to Dahlem he brought her up to date on all he had seen and particularly his own men: 'What human material he has in the SS!' she wrote.

Heini told Marga that there was to be a vote in both countries on April 10 coupled with a referendum on the Anschluss.

FOR DICTATORSHIPS, REFERENDUMS are always such fun. The voters in Austria and Germany would answer two questions: 'Do you accept Adolf Hitler as our Führer, and do you thus accept the reunification of Austria with the German Reich as effected on March 13, 1938?' The ballot paper had two circles, a large one to mark Yes, a rather smaller

one for No. As he motored around his native country with Himmler at his side, Hitler reminisced about his earlier life. The Reichsführer felt that he ought to start writing it all down, but he did not.

After Vienna, Hitler drove on with his motorcade to Nicolsburg and Pressburg (Bratislava), capital of the German-friendly Slovakia, The Austrian police secured the route, and Himmler's Gestapo added their own officers in plain clothes, 'an astonishing collection of clothes,' Hitler recalled four years later, 'rough woollen mackintosh coats, ostler's capes, and so forth,' so that even the dimmest observer could guess what they really were. He ordered his driver to take a different route – and not to stop at any traffic lights.

Himmler had returned on Sunday, March 27 and stayed in the villa that weekend, but Marga wanted to talk about Gerhard's truancy, and how unwell she had been, and her coffee morning with a dozen wives last Friday. Come Monday, he was glad to put on his black uniform to get back into the fray. 'I'm going to invite all my old friends round for coffee on Friday,' wrote Marga. 'It's just as well that I've got them. H. has no private life at all, and that's more than sad and I do miss it.'

During his absence, Marga led her own life – sending out invitations, fretting about those who had declined, and then being invited round to tea by Heli Bouhler. What a *nice* house, she thought, running her eye over the Bouhler household and mentally comparing it with Dahlem, so utterly bare downstairs: downstairs was where Heini occasionally had his cronies round for beer, while she crouched over her diary upstairs. She had enrolled in the Red Cross, and struck up a friendship with its chief, Dr Ernst-Robert Grawitz. Like the Bouhlers, *nice* Dr Grawitz would put an end to himself and his wife and children, though rather more messily – pulling the pin from a grenade as the Russian army wrote the final pages in Berlin.

THE CROSSES WHICH Marga had to bear in April 1938 were pettier than Heini's, namely the domestics and that brat Gerhard. While Püppi had brought home a good report card, the boy's was neutral, but only because he was marking time, repeating the school year. Marga had dismissed her manservant for impertinence and his wife for laziness – 'and this kind of thing in the Third Reich!' '*Ach mein*

Gott what a *Volk*!' she snorted. 'And how the Führer slaves for them!'

When Heini phoned from Austria that day she unloaded her feelings. 'People like these,' she recorded, 'should be locked up and forced to work until they die.' 'Sometimes I ask myself,' she nagged in her pages, 'am I living among human beings or not?' A few days later she told the brat's mother that her son belonged in a reformatory. 'My opinion of the human race,' recorded Frau Himmler grimly, 'has not changed one jot after this conversation.'

Gudrun made up for this, like any eight-year-old, making Easter presents to hide when they were down in Gmund and her Pappi would be back with them. As her mother came into her room the little girl squeaked and tried to conceal whatever she had been making. Together they listened to Hitler's plebiscite-eve broadcast on April 9, saddened that Heini had not phoned. 'Have not heard from H.,' wrote Marga, 'and he wanted to come home this morning.'

Along with forty-nine million Germans and Austrians she cast her vote the next day – just one of the 99.08 percent who voted Yes. It was a good result, and Hitler never bothered to ask his people again; only a few thousand had risked voting No. Sir Alexander Cadogan of the British Foreign Office commented that their ambassador in Vienna had obviously deceived them about the mood in Austria, acknowledging, 'We only forbade the *Anschluss* to spite Germany.'

Heinrich Himmler returned to Berlin on April 11 to keep his promise to spend Easter with his family down in Gmund. He gathered them and flew straight down to Bavaria, a bumpy flight which left Marga complaining of air sickness. On the way to Achensee, the largest alpine lake in the Tyrol, he either drove or slept. They planned to unload Gerhard onto some unsuspecting boarding house and invited two under-privileged Austrian children to join them for Easter. 'I hope it all pans out,' wrote Marga, but her words carried little conviction.

MARGA HIMMLER HAD paved the path of family happiness with good intentions these last ten years, but they were no longer enough. Later, she realised that that late 1937 vacation in Italy and North Africa had been the high point of their life together. There were rocks ahead;

if their marriage never ran aground it was probably due to Heini's fear of attracting Hitler's well-known disapproval of his lieutenants divorcing. Sometimes she hoped that he might talk about *feelings*, but there was none that he was willing to share with her. On April 15 she noted that he was off doing paperwork elsewhere in the large house. 'We see hardly anything of him. Now he's back at work.' The invasion of Czechoslovakia was looming.

Easter came and she hid painted eggs around the garden for Gudrun to find. In past years they invited Heini's staff to Easter lunch; this time his widowed mother came too. On Monday, it began to snow. 'H. is working today also.'

THE GENERAL STAFF was not keen on invading Czechoslovakia, and General Beck flatly rebelled against it. Himmler was eager, as his SS special forces would be providing crucial support; the SS might even have to provide a pretext for it. The Czech border territories, the Sudeten mountains, were largely populated with ethnic Germans; over three million were trapped on the wrong side of the frontiers imposed by the victors after the Great War. The 'Sudeten-Germans' were harassed and hated by the Czechs. Hungary too had been truncated. Prague was showing no inclination to compromise. The Czechs relied on beefy alliances with Paris and Moscow.

While Himmler trained his special forces, Hitler rolled out his new weapon, a phased propaganda onslaught devised by Dr Goebbels. Canaris and the *Abwehr* had fostered Sudeten-German separatists; their leader Konrad Henlein had the backing of SS *Gruppenführer* Werner Lorenz and the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle – the Central Office of Ethnic Germans. On March 28 Hitler promised Henlein and his deputy Karl-Hermann Frank that he was going to settle the Czech problem in the 'not too distant future.' Henlein was to state demands 'which will be unacceptable for the Czech government.'

Hitler assessed he had only one two-week window of opportunity: the weather would be best in the first half of October. On April 21 he asked General Keitel to draft a directive for an operation to be code-named GREEN: Major Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's new Wehrmacht adjutant, typed up some main points himself. It

would take four days to smash through the fortifications, then the armour would advance on Prague. Hitler's new high command, the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW), directed that roads and bridges were to be strengthened and the western fortifications completed to hold off the French (and their British allies).

MEANWHILE, POWERED BY A LUST for revenge, a tide of brutality had swept across Austria since Himmler 'marched in.' Twenty thousand Austrian exiles were surging back in from Germany, with one word, revenge, written across their hearts. Using Heydrich's arrest lists, Kaltenbrunner's police rounded up the opponents, along with Schuschnigg and other politicians of the 'System' era who had been unable to escape. Twenty-five thousand Viennese Jews had packed and got away on that first day; together with Communists and social democrats, these enemies hæmorrhaged into Czechoslovakia. Many National Socialists saw this – allowing their enemies to escape – as a tactical error. Next time, suggested Dr Goebbels to Hitler, referring in the last week of their lives to this lapse, if there ever *was* a next time, let's have no more Mr Nice Guy.

Others felt the frontiers should be left wide open: Prince Philipp of Hesse suggested that they leave them open for a while. 'We could get rid of the entire scum like that.' 'But not those with any foreign currency,' snarled Göring in the telephone. 'The Jews can go, but their money they'll have to leave behind. It's all stolen anyway.'

32: *Eichmann Cuts the Red Tape*

HIMMLER FLEW BACK TO VIENNA several times, overseeing the replacement and integration of police officials and infrastructure. He would recruit heavily from Catholic Austrians; these would prove more dedicated, amoral, and ruthless than those born in Germany.

He still showed little interest in the Jewish Question: in fact until the disgraceful events of November 1938 it would remain a backwater, attracting only the theorists, the Party diehards, and anti-Semites like Dr Goebbels and Gauleiter Julius Streicher of Nuremberg.

In Berlin however the security service had begun to set their sights on Judea. They had rather ignored the belligerent Jews until the Gustloff murder; then, in March 1936, the *Sicherheitsdienst* started compiling an index on Jews. With its work on masonic lodges still far from complete, but with the enforced cooperation of Jewish umbrella bodies in Berlin, the SD began cross-referencing their index. A request went to key diplomatic posts overseas to report on government officials, scientists, and journalists of Jewish blood, to feed into this card index.

The files until then were thin. The SD even had difficulty providing proof that Jews had committed acts of treachery. (Six Jews had sued the health insurance office in Danzig for putting out leaflets headed 'Only traitors buy from Jews.') From mail intercepts, the SD began to

build a picture of Jews' international connections – for example, their weekly *Die Wahrheit* (Truth) was subsidised by merchant bankers like S. M. von Rothschild and Baroness Valentine von Springer.

In 1936 the Berlin statistical office had counted 7,127 of the Jewish faith (*Glaubensjuden*) taking up residence in the city, and 12,094 leaving (573 of them to Britain), a net reduction of about five thousand. By 1937 Heydrich's '*Sicherheitshauptamt* RFSS' had begun to analyse criminal behaviour among Jews. The adult Jews were prominently engaged in lucrative businesses like drug dealing, money-changing, banking and pornography. The statistics were impressive. In April Heinrich Müller authorised providing these figures to Julius Streicher and his smutty newspaper *Der Stürmer* 'to facilitate their work of enlightenment.' In June 1937 field agencies were asked about Jewish criminality; Jews seemed fifty percent more likely to commit financial frauds.

SD men began to learn about the Talmud, the holy book used by rabbinical Jewry. They learned that Talmudic lore held that 'Jesus the Nazarene' was currently boiling in semen or hot excrement – learned opinion differed as to which; and that it defined that the proper punishment for adultery was to be choked to death but that, as so often happens in civilised society, some exceptions applied: it would not be adultery if the Jew was fornicating with 'the wife of a non-Jew.' To translate into non-Talmudic language, the *schickse* was fair game.

ONE FEATURE OF THESE captured SD files in Moscow can be mentioned here: particularly those of Franz Six's Section II/112, virtually none was currently seen or initialled by Himmler.

Himmler did however see an overview of the central problem, the Assimilationists – roughly the Jews who preferred to be seen as Germans – *vs.* the Zionists: those really keen to be Jews. The SD was tolerant of the Zionists, because their aim was emigration, to Palestine. The SD actively promoted Jewish emigration: there were 499,000 Jews residing in Germany at the time of the June 1933 census, and 136,000 fewer at the end of 1937. The policy was to force Assimilationists out of active Jewish affairs, leaving Zionists in leading positions in those Jewish organisations which were still tolerated.

The Zionists were represented by the Jewish Agency, founded in 1929, and by the Palestine Office which dealt with formalities. Palestine had been a British-mandated territory since 1922, but the Balfour Declaration of 1917 had promised the Jews an eventual 'national home' carved from Palestinian soil. The declaration, a cynical and short-sighted wartime attempt to buy an arrangement with 'world Jewry,' was actually a letter drafted by Leo Amery, a covert Jew, for the foreign secretary Lord Balfour to address to Baron Rothschild. The Assimilationists were represented by the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith. Founded in 1893, the CV had spent forty years opposing anti-Semitism, until Hitler's election victory – 'which did not however prevent them from assuring our National Socialist government of their subservience the moment we came to power,' as one SD official caustically commented.

In 1938 however Palestine was still the only realistic destination for Jewish émigrés. Nobody else really wanted them, from long experience. Himmler asked the SD to review their policy on the Jews. *Regierungsassessor* Horst Freytag submitted the result on March 24, 1938: it was a familiar quandary – if they promoted Zionist aims, Muslims would be upset. There were fears that a future Jewish home carved out of Palestine might become 'a Jewish world power.' Himmler recognized that the wealthier Jews could be useful. Germany had refused a Frau Oppenheimer an entry visa; Himmler's police adjutant Willy Suchanek wrote to the SD that the Reichsführer was minded to amend this refusal, 'provided she undertakes to remain in Germany, as Germany does not want to let their most precious pawns, the Jews, slip through her fingers.' 'This directive,' noted Freytag, 'fundamentally changes our Jewish policy.' Their policy henceforth was to encourage the 'ghetto-proletariat' to flee, while hanging on to 'rich [and] otherwise suitable Jews.'

THE ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA brought the Jewish question to the front. The problem had previously been small: of sixty-eight million inhabitants of the old Germany only four hundred thousand, or about 0.58 of one percent, were Jews. But Austria would add 250,000

Jews; 170,000 in Vienna. There were also 65,000 mixed-race Jews.

Since August 1934 Leopold von Mildenstein, a quiet Austrian Catholic, had headed the SD's Jewish Section, II/112. He had visited Palestine in 1933, become something of a Zionist, and published a dozen articles in Goebbels's tabloid *Der Angriff*; the newspaper struck a medallion with a swastika on one side and a Star of David on the other, a curiosity more prized by collectors now than by modern Zionists, who are eager to forget their flirtation with the 'Nazis.'

Heinrich Müller sent down to Vienna a zealous II/112 expert on Zionism, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Adolf Eichmann. Officially he would be a consultant to the local SD-*Oberabschnitt* Danube, which Heinz Jost had given SS *Standartenführer* Dr Franz Stahlecker to run; but Stahlecker lazily delegated things to Eichmann. Eichmann had joined the SD at thirty-two; he recalled that Müller made him swear loyalty to Himmler. It was Eichmann who had drafted the memo on the Talmud. He had gone to the same school as Ernst Kaltenbrunner. Prematurely balding, with gimlet eyes, he was assigned SD work in the former Grand Lodge in Eisenacher Strasse in Berlin, where the SD was preparing a museum of masonic rituals and artefacts. Eichmann spent his days cataloguing masonic medallions and seals, using yellow cards for the masons and red for the UOBB, the 'Independent Order of the B'nai B'rith,' a masonic body.

Mildenstein invited him to join his team. 'At that time,' wrote Eichmann, 'I would have done anything to get away from those accursed coins and seals.' Eichmann devoured the writings of Theodor Herzl, the Zionist pioneer, and even bought a hundred-page language textbook to learn Hebrew (Heydrich refused to pay for a rabbi to give him lessons). Eichmann lectured to the SD Academy in Bernau on their ideological foes. 'We are up against an enemy,' he warned, 'vastly superior to us by virtue of their millennia of learning.'

In 1937 the SD started wooing the Zionists more actively. The starting point was when Feivel Polkes came to Berlin on behalf of the Jewish underground, the Haganah. Polkes said that David Frankfurter, Gustloff's murderer, had acted as an agent of the Alliance Israëlite Universelle. Eichmann was appointed the handler of Polkes. They dined in a wine bar in Berlin's Zoo district, and Polkes

invited Eichmann to Palestine. Franz Six, head of Section II, put it up to Heydrich on June 17. Heydrich said yes, and Eichmann and Herbert Hagen, who had succeeded Mildenstein, set out by train on September 26, 1937 – Eichmann furnished with a press pass by the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and Hagen masquerading as a student. Their brief was to discuss with Zionist leaders 'mass immigration of German Jews to Palestine.'

The journey took them through Poland and the Balkans to Constanza on the Black Sea and then aboard a Romanian tramp steamer via Constantinople and Beirut to Haifa. They landed for about six hours in Haifa on October 2, Eichmann later said, and went ashore to Mount Carmel by taxi. British Intelligence refused them the visa they needed. (We shall find that in 1944 MI6 was expertly decoding both the SS and Jewish Agency telegrams.) The two SD agents cruised on to Cairo, and met Polkes in the shadow of the Pyramids on October 11 and 12, 1937. What little Eichmann had seen of the Jews impressed him, or so he reminisced while still at large in 1955: 'In the years that followed I often said to the Jews with whom I had dealings that, had I been a Jew, I would have been a fanatical Zionist.' His next visit, under different circumstances, would be in 1961. It has to be said that Eichmann rarely met Himmler, if ever.

ADOLF EICHMANN ARRIVED IN Vienna a few days after the 1938 Anschluss. He was a bureaucrat – a cog-wheel, noiseless and efficient; he transmitted energy without friction. Here everything went through 'proper' channels, through Heydrich and Heinrich Müller, and Odilo Globocnik, the Austrian Gauleiter.

Globocnik, a heavily-built, fleshy-faced National Socialist veteran born in Trieste, had been a Gauleiter during the Austrian era of illegality. Eichmann saw him as too casual, *légère*. But he enjoyed Himmler's favour – and Hitler's too, as Glaise-Horstenau had seen Hitler and Globocnik emerging 'arm-in-arm' from Hitler's study in the Chancellery on the eve of the invasion of Austria. He had few personal ambitions and did what was asked of him. On April 1, 1938 we find Globocnik writing to Karl Gerland, the future Deputy Gauleiter of Lower Austria, asking him to have the security police

step up surveillance on Communists and Catholics alike. He did not mention the Jews.

On May 30, 1938, the reconstruction in Austria was complete. Globocnik would as Gauleiter do all he could to assist Eichmann to get the Austrian Jews out. Everything was suffocating in Austrian red tape. There were inefficient officials, long lines, and administrative chaos. Eichmann's job would be to streamline the exodus. 'What did I find when I arrived?' he reminisced later. 'A totally wrecked Jewish organisational set-up. Their buildings shut down and sealed by the Gestapo.' He ordered them released from prisons, and their organisations revived. He rationalised the fiscal and passport procedures for emigration. He gave permission for a Jewish newspaper, and arranged welfare pending their departure.

Writing to Berlin, Eichmann blamed the delays on the non-Jewish lawyers whom the wealthiest Jews were instructing: they brought in sheafs of multiple applications, speeding the richer Jews out of the country, while the 'the penniless Jews have to stay behind.' The Jews in Austria were either indecently wealthy or 'ghetto proletariat of the sociopathic kind,' Freytag had written in a memorandum to Himmler. It was the reverse of what the *Sicherheitsdienst* wanted. 'The lawyers,' complained Eichmann in September 1938, 'are demanding fat fees for each passport, which the wealthy Jews are happy to pay.'

Eichmann forced the rich Jews to subsidise the emigration costs of their poorer brethren. 'After all the untruths I have had to endure these last fifteen years,' he would write, sitting in a death-cell twenty-five years later, 'the reader may find it hard to believe that I did this.' He was not sitting there without reason.

The SD had set up on August 22 a Central Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna, with offices at No. 22, Prinz-Eugenstrasse – the former Rothschild Palace. The owner, banker Louis Rothschild, was currently in prison. In name the Office was headed by Josef Bürckel, as Hitler's Reich Commissioner for Reunification; he turned it over to Stahlecker, who left its running to Eichmann. US ambassador Hugh Wilson wired to Washington a despatch about the Office the next day, August 23. (The *Forschungsamt* decoded Wilson's message and sent it immediately to the *Sicherheitsdienst*.)

THE CENSUS TAKEN IN MAY 17, 1939 found 91,480 Jews still living among the 1,920,390 inhabitants of Greater Vienna, and 213,930 still in Germany. Two-thirds of Vienna's Jews had emigrated with Eichmann's help before the end of 1939. Among those released from prison was the Zionist leader Dr Josef Löwenherz. As early as March 18, 1938, a few days after *Anschluss*, Eichmann's men had secured his cooperation. Long-forgotten records found sixty years later in the abandoned Vienna headquarters of the 'Jewish Cultural Community' showed that in 1938 and 1939 they produced for Eichmann's use card-indexes listing 118,000 Jews by name; the cards indexed the four-page questionnaires completed by each Jewish household applying for U.S. and other visas.

Later lists found, dating from late 1941, raised more painful questions: there were name-lists of Jews to be put aboard forty-five trains from Vienna. Each sealed train carried one thousand passengers to sites of which rather less was known then than now – Łódź, Minsk, Theresienstadt, and Auschwitz. Eichmann spoke about the authorship of these lists: one way and another, he wrote while still at large, he had secured the cooperation of the Jewish community leaders. Without their help, he said, it would have taken years, and a hundred times more staff, to process everybody.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT HAD INSPIRED a conference on the thorny Jewish problem. Representatives of thirty-two nations met at Evian in France from July 6, with Jewish observers but no representatives of Germany, Russia, or Czechoslovakia. There was little sympathy from Britain and her Empire, so long as the Jews were not suffering: Canada and New Zealand allowed only Anglo-Saxon immigration, while Australia smugly said that she had no problems and did not intend to import one now. All wagged their fingers at Germany; but only the Dominican Republic expressed willingness to accept any Jews; they offered to take 100,000 (but never did). The *Völkischer Beobachter* on July 13 taunted unkindly, 'Nobody Wants Them!'

Himmler read a report on Evian from Dr Werner Best on August 15: 'There has so far been no practical result which might lead to an easing of the Jewish migration problem.' Dr Löwenherz chartered a

liner, with the approval of the SD, and embarked hundreds of Jews, but no country would allow them to land. The Jews found they were universally unwelcome. Eichmann had learned this from reading Theodor Herzl – the British would accept for Palestine only those properly trained as fitters, joiners, gardeners, farmers, papermill workers, and the like. As Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organisation, observed, the world was made up of nations anxious to force them out, and those unwilling to let them in. 'Virtually every country thundered at the National Socialist regime's Jewish policies,' was Eichmann's comment ten years later, 'but not one would lift a finger to remedy the misery.' No countries were keen to accept Germany's Jews, no matter how much they had been retrained for new, lawful, professions.

DESPITE THE HANGING of the Austrian SS men involved in the botched Dollfuss shooting, Himmler was not motivated by vindictiveness. He even proposed that they should continue their unobtrusive financial support of the House of Habsburg.

Himmler instructed his historical commission in Vienna to inquire into Schuschnigg's violations of the law before *Anschluss*, and Heydrich informed his staff on May 2 that the Führer had now decided to put Schuschnigg before a tribunal, and to seize his assets when convicted. As late as September 28, 1938, Heinrich Müller was telling Vienna that the Reichsführer was asking about Schuschnigg. When Schuschnigg's wife protested about his imprisonment, Himmler replied, 'I regret that I am unable to alter your husband's situation. I have asked to be shown a weekly report on his health and will provide him with any doctor he asks for – an easement never afforded to any National Socialist imprisoned in Austria these last four years.'

IN MAY 1938 THE GERMANS paid a state visit to Italy. One of the reasons underlying the visit was the increasing likelihood of war with Britain. The SD had started preparing the visit in January, checking up on Jews who had moved down to Italy. Early in April the Gestapo reported that 'Jewish circles abroad are trying to recruit

persons ready to carry out assassination attempts in the Reich with the object of eliminating the Führer and other leading figures in Party and State.' A manhunt began for twenty-four named Jews.

Himmler accompanied Hitler to Italy, as did his friend Ribbentrop and a gaggle of ministers' wives, chattering and excitable, who had spent days on wardrobes and hair-dos. The state visit became an ordeal for both sides, with trainloads of interpreters, protocol chiefs, servants, physicians, diplomats, and adjutants; the luggage vans were bursting with gala uniforms, swords, and medals. The ladies arrived in Rome on May 3, and Himmler got to see Marga again that evening.

Ribbentrop had directed that their womenfolk were to 'show slight obeisance,' but not curtsey, to the Italian royalty. The ladies nonetheless practised curtsies in the hotel – 'There was a lot to laugh at,' recorded Marga, 'but unfortunately no photographer on hand.' At the palace she curtsied, causing the kind of clucking among the chambermaids which cries out to be parodied by A A Milne. 'At Court there are some strange customs,' she confided. 'Other than the courtiers, nobody's regarded as a human being, much less a cipher.'

An overnight train took them south to Naples for a review of the Italian fleet on May 5. 'It took some time for our ship to depart,' she noted, adding, 'and Mrs Meissner had several of her giddy spells' – a waspish comment about the wife of Otto Meissner, head of the old presidential chancellery. At the Crown Prince's, 'things went from bad to worse' – the food was poor, but the Italians were impressed by Alexander Baron von Dörnberg, the towering chief of protocol.

By May 7 the German wives noticed that their menfolk were acquiring Italian allures. 'Prince Waldeck,' exclaimed Marga, catching sight of Himmler's former adjutant, now the police chief of Kassel, 'Yes, these princes, once they sniff the heady aroma of Royalty!' They dined one evening at the sixteenth-century Villa Madama north of Rome; the painter known as Raphael had designed it. It upset Marga that they had given Himmler no seat and he was being fed at a stand-up buffet. 'I did not like that at all.' 'Things were too much for H., he was tired and stressed out.'

'It's all come about just as I predicted,' commented Ilse Hess to Mrs Ribbentrop.

ON MAY 9 THE HIMMLERS left Florence by car to return to Germany. 'I was very tired and felt I was going to be indisposed,' wrote Marga. as to which she left her husband in no doubt. She enjoyed this new bout of ill-heath and doctors' visits for another week ('even today,' she grimly rejoiced in her diary, 'May 16, I am still not well.')

Himmler had brought away some lasting impressions. Seeing an Etruscan bronze, the Chimera, in the museum in Florence he had noticed what looked like runic characters carved into the mythical beast's right paw; he directed his faithful Rudi Brandt to get a photo of the runes. It was a hobby, and let no man be mocked for that.

HE HAD HAD HIS FIRST ROW with Rudi Brandt. His stenographer had arrived in Rome burdened with mail and sore at being left out of jaunts like this trip to Rome. He was saving to buy a home for his family, and his wife had just excitedly phoned that she had found one; he would need ten thousand marks as a loan. Rudi asked Himmler: the Reichsführer made such monetary advances to officers like Karl Wolff, so there was nothing unusual in asking him.

Himmler refused. 'How old are you,' he mocked, 'and just how much is your pay as a rookie *Hauptsturmführer*?' – i.e., SS captain.

Brandt winced. Repayments were no problem; once he had made major, then he could afford more. Himmler snapped that he was getting too big for his boots, and pointedly changed the subject.

Brandt was mortified. It was the kind of thoughtless rebuff on which resentment can feed. He nursed a grievance about the episode, and he served it up one more time, seven years later. It was a few hours before the end, and they began talking about everything they had been through, as they trudged across one last meadow in northern Germany. It was the last chance to tell Himmler how much his refusal had hurt.

Himmler listened quietly. 'I didn't realise,' he said. 'I am sorry.'

33: *Brown Mischief in Berlin*

THAT SPRING HIMMLER WAS AT WORK from morning to night. Göring had promised Prague on March 11, 1938 that Czechoslovakia had nothing to fear. Hitler revealed differently to his colleagues. On April 21 planning for GREEN, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, began. On May 4 the Luftwaffe's deputy chief of operations, Colonel Hans Jeschonnek, warned of 'Britain emerging increasingly as principal enemy.' Hitler decided to deal with Czechoslovakia before 1938 ended, 'as the present balance of power might otherwise shift against us,' as Ribbentrop's state-secretary recorded on May 13. Himmler trusted the Führer to do what was best. Goebbels's chief aide Alfred-Ingemar Berndt briefed editors that propaganda was key; the old-school generals never appreciated that. Himmler, untrammelled by either staff college or battlefield experience, did.

On May 17 Hitler and his adjutant Schmundt flew down to Bavaria for the summer. Marga took the two children round Potsdam on May 19, while Heini drove over to Wewelsburg. He stayed there three days, talking with Karl Wolff and his other SS *Gruppenführer*, generals, Sepp Dietrich, Daluege, Lorenz, and Heissmeyer, and his Main Office heads Heydrich, Eicke, Johannes Schmitt (chief of SS Personnel), and Pohl; He wanted the *Gruppenführer* to admire the castle, rather as Heli had invited Marga to envy the Bouhler home.

'H. is so very tired nowadays,' she observed. 'He is overworked, that's what.'

In Berlin, the OKW drafted an interim Führer-directive for case GREEN. It began, 'It is not my intention to destroy Czechoslovakia in the immediate future by military action unless provoked . . . or political events in Europe create a particularly favourable and perhaps unrepeatable climate for doing so.' This draft reached Hitler on May 21. That same day two Czech gendarmes gunned down two Sudeten-German farmers near Eger. Prague announced the mobilisation of 200,000 troops on the pretext that Hitler was massing troops in Silesia, Saxony, and northern Austria. It was not true, but the British press gloated that Prague's 'tough action' had held him in check. On May 23, Marga met Mrs von Ribbentrop. 'There certainly are some strange things going on,' wrote Marga.

Heini was in Vienna on May 25. Hitler now had Max Wünsche as an aide-de-camp, a young SS *Obersturmführer* with his hair smarmed back. At the Berghof, Wünsche kept a useful daily register recording regular visits by Schmundt and Ribbentrop, somewhat rarer by the army's Brauchitsch, and the notable absence of gauleiters and the Party. On May 28 Hitler revealed his hand in a secret conference with Brauchitsch and other generals including Beck. Göring was not eager for war; he asked Hitler's adjutant Fritz Wiedemann, 'Does the Führer really imagine the French won't do anything if we weigh into the Czechs? Doesn't he read the *Forschungsamt* intercepts?'

Hitler now announced to his staff: 'It is my unshakeable resolve that Czechoslovakia shall vanish from the map of Europe.' The final OKW directive, GREEN, which he signed two days later echoed these words. Keitel ordered the Wehrmacht to be ready by October 1. Schmundt sketched in the details. The army's operation would be launched from Saxony and Austria. On the first day their special forces would seize fortifications. On the second day they would secure key bridges. Meanwhile, the Sudeten-German leader Konrad Henlein was to state demands of Prague – impossible demands. Speaking with him on June 3, SS *Obergruppenführer* Lorenz suggested that he dictate for example that Prague change its foreign policy; the Czech president Edvard Beneš could never agree to that.

HIMMLER WAS PLEASED with the tasks assigned to the SS and *Sicherheitsdienst* in CASE GREEN. Heydrich knew them, but informed only those who needed to know. 'Heydrich was a master of organisation and secrecy,' recalled his adjutant. 'I could see something was up from the increased level of activity.'

Eichmann prepared to move potential troublemakers out of Austria into Germany. On May 30 he notified Prinz-Albrechtstrasse that he was shipping five thousand Jews, including four thousand from Vienna, to Dachau. The first 650 would be leaving Vienna by special train at 5:35 p.m. on May 31 and more the next day. Dr Löwenherz and the Jewish Community helped him to meet these targets. On that same day, May 30, Goebbels recorded that Himmler had talked with him about the KZs: 'The gang's all there. In the interests of, and for the good of, the people, they've got to be *ausgerottet*.'

Himmler's diary for 1938 is largely missing. He flew to Gmund with his wife and daughter, to spend a few days shooting. Delayed by bad weather they landed at Nuremberg and continued by road to Gmund, calling in at Dachau on the way. As on his birthday in 1937, he had his young private secretary Hedwig Potthast with him at Gmund. Sometimes he seemingly gave the warm-blooded and cheerful Hedwig a deliberate taste of the unpleasant side of his job. Emil Bargatzky and another prisoner, Peter Forster, had beaten to death a young guard SS *Scharführer* Albert Kallweit while escaping, and been sentenced to death in Weimar. Shocked by the sight of Kallweit's shattered skull, Himmler, who had not seen death before, reinstated a shoot-to-kill policy, and ordered Bargatzky hanged before the assembled prisoners. He dictated a message to Hedwig on July 4, 1938 for Rudi Brandt to relay to Theodore Eicke, stating that 'the Reichsführer SS wishes for a detailed report on the attitude of the prisoners at the hanging of the murderer Bargatzky at Buchenwald.'

The lakeside villa at Gmund, Lindenfycht, was nearly ready: 'There is always so much to be done,' wrote Marga on June 5, 'particularly in the garden.' The weather was improving and she had rare reason to be happy: 'H. was always here – he just went off hunting on some evenings. Weather gorgeous. H. came upstairs every day after I'd turned in.' In bed she relived each day. 'These were beautiful days,'

she wrote on June 7, the eve of their drive back to Berlin. On June 10 he played bridge with Marga's sister Berta, sister in law Edith, and her husband Franz Boden until after midnight. The Reichmeisters came over too, and Marga, whose vocabulary was at best uncomplicated, felt that it was 'very *nice*.'

Back in Berlin-Dahlem, the official Himmler villa filled with high-pitched female laughter again – Ella Boden and Irmgard Papke had come. They dined or played bridge with the Italian and French ambassadors, and supped one evening in mid-June at the Kaiserhof with the Ribbentrops. Himmler stayed in Berlin until June 28, when they all flew back to Bavaria.

He might be the nation's chief of police, yet serious public disorders had begun without his having noticed or intervened.

THROUGHOUT THE NEXT MONTHS of 1938 one man increasingly clouded his horizon, Dr Joseph Goebbels. Propaganda minister since 1933, he was cultivating the useful but poisonous blossom of anti-semitism; he had no sympathy for the systematic quasi-Zionism, of Heydrich and the SD, or for their tolerance of schemes for voluntary emigration to Palestine. Goebbels had his own plans for taking on Judea, which ran athwart the economic and diplomatic interests of the Reich. His rage at the Jews began back in the 1920s, when the country's largely Jewish editors and publishers had scorned his literary output. When Goebbels came to Berlin as Gauleiter in 1926 the Jewish police chief, Bernhard Weiss, singled him out: forty times or more he dragged Goebbels into court, and lost nearly every time. Goebbels dubbed him 'Isidore.' In 1933 Weiss had fled to Prague.

Count von Helldorff effectively succeeded Weiss. In 1938, together with Goebbels, he devised ways to hound Jews out of Berlin, using police chicanery, and brute force. 'We'll write an end to Berlin as a happy hunting ground for Jews,' said Goebbels privately. 'Madagascar would be the best place for them' – a reference to a project under discussion in the foreign ministry. At Goebbels's request, Helldorff drew up a report in mid-May on ways of dealing with Judea. The *Sicherheitsdienst* experts read it with distaste. Ignoring them, Goebbels put it to Hitler at the end of May, and claimed in his diary:

'He is fully in agreement.' When Goebbels wrote those words, more often than not Hitler was demonstrably anything but 'in agreement': but Goebbels's diary was written for posterity (in fact he had already sold rights to the Party's Franz Eher Verlag).

During late May 1938 Heydrich's SD agents brought back to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse word of the 'propaganda methods' being used against Jews. Beginning on May 27, squads of Hitler Youth and SA Brownshirts, usually in plain clothes, were daubing the word *Jude* in red paint on shopfronts. On May 31 the regular police, the *Ordnungspolizei*, carried out a razzia in Kurfürstendamm, cordoning off two cafes, Reimann and Dobrin, and arresting three hundred Jewish customers on various pretexts. The public endorsed these operations, according to SD reports (foreign newspapers disagreed).

If these same Berlin police units could peer three years ahead, they would see themselves forming up along trenches far to the east, waiting for victims, and ammunition being issued for their carbines.

FOR TWO WEEKS the streets of Berlin fell silent, but Dr Goebbels and Helldorff were planning an even larger episode, which would last for four days; this time, Hitler angrily stepped in and called a halt.

It began on Friday June 17 with orchestrated violence and the clatter of breaking glass in Berlin's Jewish quarters. The police began arresting Jews for petty offences like jaywalking, vagrancy, suspicion of espionage, or just that police standby, provocative behaviour. About two thousand Jews were picked up and about 250 cars they owned were impounded for safety checks. 'The police have understood my instructions,' recorded Goebbels on June 19.

Heydrich began an independent investigation into who was behind it all. Helldorff sent a report down to Hitler in Bavaria – it was found in Hitler's apartment at Prinzregentenplatz years later. The SD Jewish desk stated: 'Nobody can state at what top level this entire operation was started. But there is speculation that it is either the Gauleiter of Berlin, or even the Reich propaganda minister himself.' It made no difference – both were the same: Dr Joseph Goebbels.

DR GOEBBELS HAD OVERLOOKED two things. Public outrage was

one: Heydrich's agents reported quietly that Berliners were reacting with fury to the campaign. 'People keep asking whether it was really necessary for our government, six years after we came to power, to resort to propaganda methods like those employed in the anti-Jewish boycott on April 1, 1933.' Besides, it would be the German insurers who had to pay for the wreckage, not the Jewish shopkeepers.

Public anger was echoed by foreign journalists. Dr Goebbels overlooked that the *Forschungsamt* intercepts were reaching Hitler on the Obersalzberg. On June 19 the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* front-page headline read: RIOT IN BERLIN WAR ON JEWS. NAZIS MENACE POLICE WHO TRY TO CURB MOBS. 'PAINT SQUADS' ROAM CITY; SMEAR SHOPS. The FA intercepted the French ambassador's despatch to Paris on the twentieth: while François-Poncet carefully blamed foreign Jews in part, he reported: 'Local Nazi groups yesterday daubed windows of Jewish stores in Berlin with the Star of David and the word *Jude* in large red letters. . . The public did (?not) . . . seem to approve of the operation. There were rough-houses in some places. . . Jews were manhandled before being sent to concentration camps in Thuringia.'

Hitler respected François-Poncet. He ordered an immediate stop on June 21. His 'stop order' was quoted in SD documents. Goebbels and Helldorff, called out thus, began pointing fingers at each other.

WITH HINDSIGHT, THE EVENTS of June 17 to 21, 1938 in Berlin were less *déjà vu*, than a preview of things to come. Himmler's local police chiefs ordered the arrest of the guilty, 'regardless of whether they are Party members or not.' In Frankfurt, Party officials found themselves being arrested by police along with the rioters.

The SD investigation soon established that Dr Goebbels had called senior *Ordnungspolizei* officers and local police commanders, about three hundred men, to his propaganda ministry for a 'training session' on June 10 and here, as he boasted in his own diary, 'I fired them up good and proper. Against any sentimentality. Motto is, not what's lawful, but harassment. The Jews must get out of Berlin.'

Himmler was outraged, but as a Reich minister, Goebbels outranked him. Heydrich learned that he had 'hinted to the police officers that they should crack down hard on the Jewish community' no matter

how petty their offences. On June 17 an internal SD memo made this plain: 'SD Sub-Section Greater Berlin reports that Dr Goebbels stated during a conference with police officers in the propaganda ministry on June 10 that the increasing audacity of the Jews has to be met with tougher measures.' Downright chicanery, said Goebbels, would be in order. As he put it, harking back to pre-1933 Berlin: 'Just as the then police chief "Isidore" Weiss probably pondered each day how best to mess [*schikanieren*] the Nazis around, now it is right and proper for the police officer to work out how best he can mess up the Jews.'

After Hitler intervened, Heydrich called for a rethink. Nationwide, so Section II/112 directed, every step on the Jewish question had to be approved by him. 'Any measure which may have negative effects on emigration is *out*.' On the twenty-first the *Völkischer Beobachter* published an article with the mocking title, 'The Poor Jews.' Heydrich exploded with anger: the article had fictitious statistics, which 'bore absolutely no relationship to the actual figures.' These showed a net decrease in Jewish migration to Berlin. Heydrich personally tackled Berndt, Goebbels's chief spin-master. Berndt blamed Helldorff. 'We were well aware,' said Berndt blithely, 'that the figures were false.'

That night every Jewish store in Magdeburg was daubed with red paint. The economics minister Walther Funk protested to Göring. Dr Goebbels shrugged. The Gestapo too washed its hands of responsibility; the arrest of 2,000 Jews, he claimed, had been the work of Daluege's regular police. On June 22, *The Daily Telegraph* ran a news item headed: 'GERMAN DISGUST AT JEW PURGE. HITLER UNAWARE OF ITS EFFECTS.' 'There is reason to believe,' wrote its well-informed Berlin correspondent, 'that Herr Hitler, who is cut off from direct access to reports . . . may not be fully aware of the impression created abroad and in diplomatic quarters here by the outrages.' The actual clipping was pasted into Heydrich's files.

The SD learned that Helldorff ordered the systematic defacing of Jewish stores to halt at five p.m. on June 21. SA *Obergruppenführer* Dietrich von Jagow, Brownshirt commander in Berlin-Brandenburg, pleaded that he could not call off his men in time. The Goebbels diary confirmed the stop-order but without mentioning Hitler. Goebbels disowned any blame: 'Helldorff did the reverse of what I ordered,'

he wrote on June 22: 'I had said that the police were to act as though within the law, with the Party just acting as onlookers. The opposite has now happened. I summon all the Party authorities and issue new orders. Anyway,' he reflected, 'this type of rough justice does have its blessings. The Jews have been given one hell of a fright and they'll probably think twice now before regarding Berlin as their Eldorado.'

Ribbentrop too was furious, as the foreign repercussions were severe. The city sent in street cleaners to sweep up. On June 24 Goebbels wrote, as truthfully as ever: 'Operation Jew has now died down. . . I take firm action to prevent a recurrence.' The ministry of food reported to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse that Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary had all cut back food exports to Germany in retaliation. Goebbels recorded after visiting Bayreuth that Hitler had 'endorsed' his Berlin operation (he obviously had not): 'It is immaterial what the foreign press writes,' Goebbels noted. 'The main thing is to squeeze the Jews out. Ten years from now they must all have been removed from Germany.' For the time being, he added, probably quoting what Hitler actually said, they would retain the Jews – as pawns.

WE HAVE DWELT UPON this summer episode at length for a reason. There are still writers who cling to the view that Hitler triggered the later episode known as Crystal Night in November 1938.

Oblivious to the nastiness, Himmler had kept his head down, vacationing at the Berghof. Marga filled the Berlin-Dahlem villa with ladies. She and Heini spent the next day at the Ribbentrops and on the twenty-third they drove over to see her sick father.

Heini was virtually never home, wrote Marga a few days later, and besides that, he would keep seeing everything through rose-tinted glasses. 'Sometimes,' she wrote on June 26, 'I am deeply shaken (*erschüttert*) about something or other, but to H. it is trivial, and yet,' she added, grappling for words, 'he's in charge of so many people, and he could step in and put a stop to it.' It was possibly a reference to the rioting; her silent anger at Heini deepened that summer.

Heydrich was anything but indifferent. He issued an internal directive 'reserving exclusively to himself, in light of the happenings in Berlin, the right to take individual actions against Judea.' He

disliked Helldorff, the arrogant, heavy-drinking Berlin police chief. Against Himmler's opposition, Helldorff had just extended licensing hours in Berlin, explaining to Dr Goebbels it was a 'world class city'. Himmler wrote to the police chief: 'A Berlin SA-man tells one of my officials that you and Wedel have Dr [Julius] Dresel as dentist.' Dresel was a Jew. 'I'm assuming that you and Wedel didn't know, and that you won't be going to him in future.' Count Alfred von Wedel, his wife a friend of Marga's, was the Potsdam police chief and Helldorff's brother-in-law. On June 25 an SD officer asked Berlin for a copy of the 'Plan of Action for Dealing with the Jewish Question.' He was told, 'The only available copy . . . is currently up with the Chief of Security Police,' meaning Heydrich himself, 'and cannot be retrieved.'

'The most recent operation is said to have been triggered by Minister Goebbels, in written directives to Party headquarters.' So the minister of economics, Walther Funk, had learned. Himmler protested about Helldorff to Goebbels. Goebbels muttered about Helldorff's disloyal behaviour and propensity for dabbling in politics, and commented, 'I'll have to break him of that.'

Finally sensitive to the economic consequences, Count von Helldorff issued new guidelines. He planned eventually, he said, to rid Berlin of all the Jews, but to get them to emigrate and 'not just for instance to mess them around without prospect of success.'

There was no need for anything illegal, Helldorff said.

34: *Chamberlain and Munich*

HEINRICH HIMMLER WENT SOUTH TO BAVARIA, to join the Führer on the Obersalzberg. Hitler's staff logged the Reichsführer's arrivals, for instance a 'private visit' on June 29, 1938, at three-fifteen p.m. They strolled over to the tea-house with the Bormanns and photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. Himmler left after five hours. Not everybody was welcome at Hitler's Berghof; it showed that Himmler was rising in Hitler's favour.

Marga had also come to Bavaria for what she cynically called 'my vacation, so-called,' as family and friends descended on her comfortable villa. On July 3 she had been married to Heini for ten years; the anniversary nearly eluded him. 'H. is not here, but he called by phone,' she acknowledged: 'I have had to forego so much that being married means. H. is almost never home, and buried in his work.' Their gardener janitor was hard to get on with, but she wouldn't get angry, she decided. 'As H. says, make *others* angry, never yourself.' Gudrun instinctly knew how to get round her parents, like children of any age. Marga wrote, 'Püppi is so sweet and *nice*. I just hope she never falls ill.'

They drove into Munich for the arts festival with its gaudy street parade. 'There was much ado, and a lot of aggravation for H. Führer was very grim and depressed. Was not pleased. We just took in the

opera and the opening on July 10 and the festival procession; it rained a lot which didn't exactly lift our spirits. We had tea with Dr Goebbels and his wife.' She marvelled at Magda Goebbels. Heini kept Magda uninformed of the Goebbels marital drama, but the SD fed him every detail: Goebbels had his Achilles heel, one called Lída Baarová. Himmler's demure young secretary Hedwig Potthast was certainly down in Gmund, as she even signed Himmler's correspondence, like a telegram answering Karl Wolff, who asked if the SS could properly accept a donation from Carl Rudolf Stahl, CEO of the Salzdetfurth Corporation in Berlin.

Once Marga took Gudrun with her little friend Röschen to Valepp, 'their valley,' in the countryside. Here craftsmen from Heini's camps had converted a deserted customs-house, in valleys carpeted with edelweiss. The girls saw their first deer, and feasted on wild berries – we've had that kind of summer day ourselves, the kind one remembers long after. Heini's older brother Gebhard ('of all people,' Marga grumbled) came with their widowed mother, and his own children and in-laws. 'They always announce their coming at the last moment,' Marga complained; she was glad to be returning to Berlin.

HIMMLER PAID A VISIT to the Essen hospital where Josef Terboven was recovering from an aircraft accident: the Ruhr Gauleiter had flown his own plane straight into an aircraft hangar, with unfortunate consequences. Frau Terboven's album shows Himmler and Hitler, wearing a cloak, playing with her little girl. Himmler travelled aboard the Führer's train to Godesberg, to lunch at the Hotel Dreesen on the Rhine. With Hitler, Fritz Todt, and army generals he joined a conference on the West Wall, the line of bunkers being built to hold Britain and France at bay during CASE GREEN. The luncheon ended on a sour note for the police chief of Düsseldorf, Fritz Weitzel: '4:45 p.m.,' recorded Max Wünsche: 'the Führer confiscates the driving licence of SS *Obergruppenführer* Weitzel's chauffeur for six months, and directs the Reichsführer to crack down on traffic offenders.'

Dr Goebbels's recent anti-Jewish campaign had disturbed the surface tension in Central Europe. The Jews had swooped in everywhere. Turkey had stripped its Jewish citizens living in Berlin of

Turkish citizenship, to prevent their returning, and asked the Aliens Office to seize their passports; Himmler ordered them expelled, but a police official, *Polizeirat* Anika, 'who seems not really to have grasped the Jewish Question,' as the SD noted, sabotaged his order.

At the end of March, as Polish Jews escaping from Austria started scurrying back to Poland, Warsaw passed a law which would strip them of their Polish citizenship if still living abroad after October 31. In Berlin alone there were over twelve thousand Polish Jews, a product of the Polish–German agreement of 1934. The Polish law rang alarm bells in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. To beat the Warsaw deadline, Heydrich swiftly issued an expulsion order on the Jews. The Jews went underground and spun out their illegal stay, aided by Berlin lawyers. The SD had captured thousands of the Polish names in its master-indexes anyway. The fear was, as II/112 put it, 'that Germany will be saddled for years to come with Jews of Polish nationality.' Sooner or later something would have to be done.

IN THE BACKGROUND of all this, the engines of war were beginning to stir. On July 17 Ribbentrop instructed his embassy in Prague to 'keep demanding more than the other side is able to concede.' Goebbels heard Himmler talking of their generals' uselessness. 'Of course,' Goebbels observed, 'our Berlin generals are all wetting their pants again. . . The Führer wants to avoid actual war. It's why he's preparing.'

Himmler was overawed by Hitler, this Messianic leader. On Jüterbog airfield, workers had built mock-ups of the Czech frontier bunkers, and on August 15, Colonel Walter Model staged an infantry attack on these fortifications following a bombardment by artillery. Lecturing the generals in secret Hitler said his life's task was to expand Germany's *Lebensraum* – to this end he had founded the Party, left the League of Nations, reintroduced conscription, remilitarised the Rhineland, and reunited Austria with the Reich.

'In political life you must believe in the Goddess of Fortune,' Hitler lectured them. 'She passes by just once, and that's when to grasp her!' The next step was Czechoslovakia. He scoffed at the 'effete' General Beck and his general staff. Provided Germany showed no sign of weakness, Britain and France would hesitate. 'By the time this year

is out,' he said, 'we shall all be looking back on a great victory.' General Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb jotted in his diary: 'Chips down. Führer convinced Britain and France won't intervene. Beck opposite opinion, mood gloomy.' Beck resigned in a huff. He would not trouble Hitler again until July 1944. Hitler selected General Franz Halder to replace him. CASE GREEN could not begin before October 1 anyway: the Czechs might arrest Konrad Henlein, and Hitler needed his Freikorps, a 'secret weapon' for breaching the fortifications. Hitler hinted that he might even delay GREEN until the spring, but this was just a smokescreen.

FOR FOUR WEEKS THE Reich capital sweltered beneath a heatwave worse than anyone could remember. Marga fled down to Gmund and the servants. 'It's ages since I last wrote anything,' she fumed in her diary's pages on August 26. 'I got so worked-up because of the shameless hussy I had here.' Heini could read the smoke-signals and ('luckily') fired the serving-girl. Evidently fluent in smoke-signal language, their cook took sick too, and Marga ended up doing the cooking for herself. 'Works fine by me,' she sniffed. 'Today H. is not here and no visitors, and a beautiful quiet day with a lot of sunshine.'

To pile pressure onto Prague, Hitler invited Admiral Miklós Horthy, the Hungarian regent, to pay a state visit. Hitler beefed up the usual ceremonial with the launching of a heavy cruiser, *Prinz Eugen*, and a cruise to Heligoland in the North Sea. The generals and Himmler were aboard, bringing a clutch of wives to keep Madame Horthy company. Himmler was keen to see the Friesian islet. It was once known as Heyligeland, he said, or holy land, but was now without fresh water, eroded by the seas and spattered by thousands of years of disrespectful seagulls. Himmler wrote to the president of *Ahnenerbe*, to find out what sagas said about the island.

This was the other Heinrich Himmler, indulging his real hobby, ancient history: a magpie constantly gathering morsels of a glittering past. Dissatisfied by Professor Wüst's over-cautious answer Himmler suggested: 'Probably Heligoland was once a major holy place for the Frisians'. His inquisitive mind then fluttered off into Torshavn in the Faroes, which he wanted geologists to search for aquifers reaching as

far as Heligoland. Himmler learned that in olden days the Germanic tribes were wont to attempt intercourse only on certain days around the summer solstice – 'the "high time" from which we get our word *Hochzeit*, marriage.' He asked Wüst to check ancient birth records to see. If so, one day it might be worth another try.

MARGA WAS NOT consulted. Her interests were now bounded by kitchen quarters and backyard. Writing of these days, she recalled Heligoland, and Madame Horthy, and 'all the *nice* incidentals,' but also the blonde wife Heli of *Reichsleiter* Philipp Bouhler: 'Frau Bouhler didn't show up, she wasn't happy with her [shipboard] quarters. I can't stand the pomposity of these people any longer. Then she did turn up with her husband, and went on and on about it, in the presence of Frau Popp, Ella Blank, Lydia and the rest of us. Some people have worries! "That's the wife of a *Reichsleiter* for you," as somebody rightly said.' She had a familiar remedy: 'I've finally decided to send *all* the maids packing, and two new ones are moving in. A real housekeeper is also coming in a few days' time.'

Himmler had no say in it. Late on August 26, he was with Hitler, looking over West Wall fortifications. At Aachen they were met by General Adam. Twenty-three years older than the SS chief, this Bavarian officer was one for whom Hitler and Himmler had a shared contempt. Adam asked to speak alone with Hitler in the dining car. 'As general commanding the western front, I obviously have a far better insight into the situation here than anybody else, and my worries are consequently bigger –.' Hitler snapped: 'Get to the point!' The general's days in command were over.

On August 28 Hitler declared, for the benefit of the media: 'I am convinced that our German troops can never be shot out of these positions.' Unimpressed by the generals, he scoffed next day: 'Only a scoundrel could not hold this front!' Himmler had to agree.

FOR A FEW DAYS the Dahlem household in Berlin was overrun with women. Marga exchanged visits with Bormann's wife Gerda, and had sisters and aunts over. On September 3 Heini fled the noise, to Nuremberg, for the annual Party Rally. 'I'll try to recuperate,' Marga

promised her diary, 'then I'll drive over too.' And so she arrived in Nuremberg, like the Queen of Sheba, for what would prove her last Party Rally. 'I would miss it a lot if I didn't attend it next time,' she wrote absently: was she thinking of leaving Heini, perhaps? But there were many SS wives at the hotel and everybody showered flowers and gifts on her as Himmler's wife when her birthday came. Himmler toured his SS units. His friend Richard Darré came along too, as an honorary SS general: 'In the SS camp with Himmler,' he wrote, impressed. 'Loud jubilation. Proof that Heini has somehow succeeded in capturing the hearts and minds of his SS.' And Dr Goebbels echoed this: 'In the evening I drive over briefly to the SS camp.' How these men adored Himmler, this man with the jovial smile and close-cropped hair and permanent five o'clock beard. 'They would go through hell for him and Hitler, without reasoning why,' wrote Goebbels. 'All the diplomats are there. Himmler and [Józef] Lipski both speak. Of comradeship.'

THE NUREMBERG RALLY began, with ambassadors from all over the world. Relaxing at the Deutscher Hof on September 7, after a march-past by fit young men shouldering spades, Hitler revealed his thinking on race. Himmler dictated to Hedwig Potthast a short note:

> Following the parade by the Reich Labour Service the Führer spoke at length about the racial upgrading of our nation. He said that what mattered was that a nation had a homogeneous, and racially impeccable, upper class. He mentioned the British, whose racial quality – as witness British soldiers – was not particularly outstanding, while England's upper class was homogeneous and a magnificent racial elite, and this gives Britain such political clout. This upper class reacts, he said, as one man in everything.
>
> The Führer then turned to me [*continued Himmler*] and said: 'It is your mission and your task in the SS to ensure that this racial elite is created, and penetrates more and more as a racial upper class into positions of government. It is important that this racial elite breeds and multiplies, so that there will always be enough members of this upper class at hand.

For five hours on the eleventh Hitler took the salute, standing in his car at Adolf-Hitler Platz, as the tens of thousands of SA and SS troops stomped past his reviewing stand, to the thump and blare of bands.

On the twelfth he delivered a belligerent speech, threatening Prague and promising the Sudeten-Germans that their day of liberation was near. That evening Henlein mounted a token attempt at a putsch in the Sudeten region; President Beneš crushed it and declared martial law. Henlein demanded that Prague back down, knowing that Beneš would not, then fell back with Karl-Hermann Frank to the safety of Asch, a sliver of 'Czech' territory protruding into the Reich.

NOT EVERYTHING WENT TO PLAN. LATE on the thirteenth, the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain, aged seventy, unexpectedly offered to fly immediately to Germany to seek a solution. Chamberlain's offer was annoying, and Hitler had no option but to accept. He asked Himmler to provide an SS guard of honour, and told Keitel to bring the timetable for GREEN down from Berlin; he might have to intimidate the Englishman like Schuschnigg in February. With just two left weeks to October 1, his deadline for GREEN, he could not afford a false step. Himmler installed Marga at the same Berchtesgaden hotel as the Ribbentrops.

At six p.m. on September 15, Rudolf Hess sent limousines down into Berchtesgaden to meet the Chamberlain Party at the station. Thirty white-gloved SS men formed up on the terrace below the Berghof, and Chamberlain was escorted past more SS men into the Great Hall. Hitler set out the German case. Ribbentrop's Staatssekretär Ernst von Weizsäcker later wrote to his mother: 'The Führer related to Ribbentrop and me how his talks went. Both from an objective and from a psychological point of view it was perhaps the most interesting thing I've heard for a long time.'

Chamberlain decided that Beneš was in the wrong, and returned to London. That was bad. It was not to Hitler's liking at all. From the intercepts, Hitler knew the pressure Britain was piling onto Prague.

On September 16, Henlein's hard-line deputy Karl-Hermann Frank visited the Berghof. He received permission to set up a Sudeten-German legion, and issued orders to collect military-age

refugees in a 'Sudeten-German Free Corps' under Henlein's command. Uneasy at how things were going, the OKW attached Lieutenant-Colonel Friedrich Köchlin to Henlein, and ordered Köchlin to report to the Berghof that evening, September 17.

Himmler and Ribbentrop drove together up the Obersalzberg on the seventeenth. They arrived jointly just before lunch with Hitler at 1:25 p.m., as Wünsche's diary records, and left him five hours later. Goebbels arrived at three-fifteen p.m., bringing his press and radio chiefs with him. (Goebbels wrote in his diary that Hitler lunched alone with him. In fact Goebbels was housed with Hanke in the guest house: he was in the dog-house, for his marital reasons.)

Hitler invited all to join him with Himmler and British journalist George Ward Price up in the newly built Eagle's Nest, a dining room perched on top of the Kehlstein. Over tea and cakes, Hitler again described his meeting with Chamberlain, who had now left for London; he was an 'ice-cool,' calculating, Englishman. While quite ready to risk a war, the Englishman had supported a plebiscite in the Sudeten territories; he would put this to Prague and return for further talks on the twenty-second.

Hitler had affably suggested meeting at Bad Godesberg, closer to London than the Obersalzberg: 'The Führer orders that a SS guard of honour is to receive [Ambassador] Henderson and Chamberlain,' recorded Wünsche, 'and a guard of honour also at the Hotel Petersberg' – high above the Rhine, where the British party would live. 'Order passed to the Reichsführer SS.'

Goebbels right-hand man Berndt began planting stories about Czech rampages in Sudeten villages. They were fictions, as Henlein's press chief Franz Höller pointed out to Goebbels – one featured his own native village. 'Tell me,' retorted Goebbels, 'how big is your village?' 'So, three hundred people know we are lying. But the rest of the world still has to find out!'

The Chamberlain plan virtually instructed Prague to cede to Germany all the Sudeten areas holding more than 59 percent German population. The French reluctantly agreed, and during the nineteenth the British communicated it to President Beneš. Then the *Forschungsamt* sounded an alarm: analysing the phone lines crossing

German territory between London and Prague, they found evidence that Beneš intended to play for time in the hope that Winston Churchill's secret opposition group would overthrow Chamberlain. The intercepts suggested that Prague was even bribing Mr Churchill.

'WE'VE HAD A SPLENDID TIME here,' wrote Marga on September 20, back at Gmund. 'H. and I spent two days in Berchtesgaden with the Ribbentrops in their hotel. H. has just gone off to join the Führer's train to Godesberg. What's going to come of all this?' Heini was not telling her. 'Chamberlain was over here, and is coming on Thursday again.' Then, 'They just phoned: H. is coming down here this evening and won't be leaving until tomorrow.'

Hitler's special train hauled into Godesberg station. He and Himmler lodged at the Hotel Dreesen. Himmler had Chamberlain met by a guard of honour of the black-uniformed SS *Leibstandarte*; they changed later that day into warlike field grey. It was a hint. The tone stiffened. Ribbentrop was in civvies, rather than morning dress.

The talks started friendly enough. After hearing from his friend Himmler by phone, Darré wrote: '*Summa summarum*, everything seems to be developing pretty harmlessly.' Later he added: 'During the day, a crisis developed. Outright war becomes likely. At ten p.m. I called my section chiefs together to discuss the situation.' Darré added that he was disappointed in Werner Willikens and his banal remarks: 'Typical of a whole bunch of National Socialists, completely immersed in their own gratification and blindly trusting in the genius of Adolf Hitler to see that nothing disrupts their daily complacency.'

What had happened was this. Hitler had upped the ante. After Chamberlain described how he had persuaded his cabinet and France with difficulty to accept the Berghof plan, Hitler responded: 'I'm frightfully sorry but that won't do any longer.' Hungary and Poland, he said, were concerned about their minorities in Czechoslovakia: he now expected the Czechs to cheat – and the Wehrmacht was insisting on occupying the German areas immediately.

Chamberlain was dismayed. The *Forschungsamt* heard his party advising London to tell Prague to mobilise. Beneš complied. Chamberlain returned to London. At 10:30 p.m. word reached Hitler:

'Beneš has just announced general mobilisation over Czech radio.' The British fleet had put to sea. The initiative – war or no war – was with Hitler. He handed the British an ultimatum. Prague must cede the Sudeten regions to Germany and must also satisfy the claims stated by Poland and Hungary. The ultimatum would expire at two p.m. on September 28. It did not take long for France, Britain, and Czechoslovakia to refuse. The *Forschungsamt* heard Beneš telling his ambassador in London: 'It would mean nothing more nor less than the immediate surrender of our whole nation into Hitler's hands.'

Quite so, Hitler will have felt, reading the secret intercept.

Himmler left wife and in-laws in Gmund and returned to Berlin–Dahlem. The weather had been glorious, but thunderstorms set in. Up in her room Marga wrote a wan summary: 'The Godesberg talks are now over. H. is in Berlin, and I'm sitting here. What now?' He had not told her much. 'Everybody is disappointed because we're not going in with fists flying. There's a dreadful mood around here – even Ella's got the bug. It's just too bad that one can't be alone. How I'd love to be with H. in Berlin. He's rattling around by himself in that big unfurnished house.'

THIS WAS TO BE A NEW KIND of warfare, including guerrilla warfare. CASE GREEN would start when Hitler's ultimatum expired on September 30, 1938 or soon after. On the twenty-fifth Himmler talked with his friend Darré: 'Himmler has told me of orders to send units of Death's Head troops,' wrote Darré, 'camouflaged as Sudeten-German Free Corps, into Czech territory,' starting with Asch. The Death's Head units were forces, irregulars, which Eicke had been raising from camp-guard veterans since 1936. Two *Sturmbanne*, platoons, would be equipped with field guns and given the job of protecting an 'autonomous Sudeten-German government' which Henlein was installing in Asch. Himmler wanted to have his SS men out in front to speed up security operations which would accompany every invasion from now on. Later, he and Darré met again: 'In the evening Himmler is round at my place. We talk until far into the night.'

The regular army disdained these methods, and forbade the use of their uniforms. Himmler was not choosy. For legal reasons, he

had his men armed with Austrian rifles. Henlein's Free Corps, ten thousand strong, were for the most part young, daredevils and cut-throats. Himmler's right-hand man, *Gruppenführer* Gottlieb Berger, on September 26 claimed the Free Corps for the SS, ignoring protests from the army. Himmler issued orders that for GREEN, the Free Corps would come under his command. Like Hitler, he had little time for the 'decrepit' army generals.

The OKW directed again that on the contrary, Henlein's men would come under the army. Hitler annulled the OKW directive: 'The Henlein Free Corps as presently constituted will be subordinated to the Reichsführer SS.'

WITH TWO DAYS LEFT before the ultimatum expired, Hitler hoped to drive a wedge between the British, French, and Czech governments. He asked Göring to show Henderson the FA file recording all Beneš's conversations since the fourteenth: the language used by the Czech was foul-mouthed, and lacking in proper reverence for the British.

Later that day, September 26, Hitler made plain in a rousing Sport Palace speech that he was ready to smash Czechoslovakia. He told Köchlin to step up Free Corps 'activity'. The ultimatum was extended by one day. In Berlin, war fever reached a climax. Bitter disputes broke out behind closed doors. Himmler and Ribbentrop wanted war, Göring did not.

At 12:30 p.m., the British ambassador arrived with a formal proposal for a new conference. Prague would not be invited. 'I am ready,' wrote Chamberlain to Hitler, 'to come to Berlin myself.' In deference to Mussolini, who would come from Rome, Hitler suggested Munich for the historic new conference.

Marga sat in her dressing room and waited for Heini to come home. 'What is he going to tell me about the meeting of our heads of state, and what is going to happen now?' Or maybe, she mused, wife-like, Heini would not be home that night. At eight-fifty p.m. that day, September 28, Himmler was aboard Hitler's special train as it glided out of Berlin heading south to Munich.

The next morning, Hitler and his men were at the small German frontier station waiting for Mussolini. When they returned they

found Daladier and Chamberlain had arrived at the Führer Building in Munich. A photographer snapped them sprawled on sofas and armchairs as SS flunkies in white jackets handed round cigars and Chamberlain reminisced about fishing weekends. The talks dragged on for hours. Himmler hovered in his black uniform, but took no part. The photos show him emerging at three p.m. behind the Führer.

Hitler retired to his apartment for lunch with Himmler, Mussolini, and Ciano. He could not conceal his irritation at Chamberlain: 'He has haggled over every village and petty interest like a marketplace stallholder, worse than the Czechs would have been! What's it to him!' Gone was the insignificant Englishman of whom he had got the better at the Berghof and at Godesberg. 'I never have *weekends*,' exclaimed Hitler, 'and I *hate* fishing!' 'It's time Britain stopped playing governess to Europe,' he complained. 'If she can't drop that act, in the long run war can't be avoided. And I'll fight that war as long as you and I are still young, Duce, because this war will be a gigantic test of strength for our two countries, and it will call for men in the prime of life at the head of their respective governments.' There was more of the same. They argued until the early hours of the thirtieth. The Munich Agreement was typed, amended by Hitler and retyped, until everything was perfect.

The absent President Beneš was given ten days to hand over the disputed regions. The news of this eleventh-hour victory caused as much satisfaction, as had the prospect of all-out war just a few hours earlier. Marga Himmler wrote: 'Elfriede [Boden, her mother] just called, is over the moon with joy that there will be no war.'

Hitler gave Goebbels much of the credit. He boasted a few weeks later to his editors, meeting in Munich, about the 'dreamlike' success of their propaganda war. It had not in fact been entirely bloodless. The Free Corps was dissolved on October 10; it claimed to have carried out 164 raids on Czech outposts, killing 110 Czechs for the loss of fifty-two of their own, and taking 2,029 prisoners. The Czechs had built formidable frontier fortifications in these regions.

AMONG GERMANY'S JEWS there had been near-panic as the country had seemed on the brink of war. SD agents in Berlin reported to

Heydrich: 'On Thursday September 29 at 11:49 p.m. significant numbers of Jews with piles of baggage were seen boarding the train to Warsaw at the Friedrichstrasse station.' In Poland, Judea calculated, there was surely safety.

AS THE LIMOUSINE CARRIED HIM AWAY, Chamberlain pondered what loads these new roads could bear. He asked the SS driver to halt, and he climbed out. The elderly Englishman produced a ruler, and measured the thickness of the concrete. It seems the British were not fools either.

35: *Five Shots fired in Paris*

OVER DINNER ON OCTOBER 2, 1938 HITLER assured his guests that his ultimate resolve was still to smash Czechoslovakia.

With Heinrich Himmler in tow, he toured the newly regained Sudeten territories. They went by train, or in a convoy of open cars, or marched in triumphant procession through unmistakeably German cities draped with welcoming banners. A photo shows the Reichsführer sharing army rations with the generals. In November Hitler told his assembled newspaper editors that it was only when he stood amidst the abandoned Czech fortifications that he realised what it meant to have captured such a front line without firing a single shot. 'We would have shed a lot of blood,' he admitted to Goebbels.

Himmler's forces had contributed to the victory. Werner Lorenz joined him, as did Heydrich and Udo von Woyrsch, who commanded the local *Oberabschnitt* South-East. 'We talked a lot,' recalled Woyrsch, 'and laughed a lot too.' There are photographs of Himmler in the dining car of Hitler's special train touring the Sudeten region, sharing a joke with Rudolf Schmundt and Colonel Erwin Rommel, freshly appointed as Commandant of the Führer's Headquarters.

THE MUNICH TRIUMPH HAD restored Dr Goebbels in favour. In 1936 he had begun a friendship with a lithe and beautiful film star, Lída

Baarová, who was unfortunately a native Czech. She told us that their actual intimacy lasted a few weeks – not that there is any hint in the minister's handwritten diaries, just references to 'motor outings' to the suburb where she lived. The FA tapped her phone, and unmarked Gestapo vehicles parked in her street; this was probably the origin of Goebbels' nervous warnings to Helldorff about SD snooping. Magda Goebbels complained to Hitler and wept on Emmy Göring's shoulder about the 'devil incarnate' she had married; Himmler might have a querulous wife, but at least Marga did not call him that.

Himmler kept up a sly campaign against Dr Goebbels far into 1939. He mentioned it to Hitler, who was fond of Magda Goebbels. Himmler told Alfred Rosenberg, that Magda had given her husband Dr Goebbels three months to come to heel. 'The women are lining up to swear affidavits,' said Himmler: 'I've handed some to the Führer.' 'As you know,' he told Rosenberg, 'I've never liked people like Dr G, and I've kept my views to myself. But today he's the most hated man in Germany. Earlier, we cursed the Jewish bosses who forced themselves sexually onto their female employees. Today it's Dr G. Obviously, in his case the females are not doing it out of love, but because he's propaganda minister.'

Hitler ordered Goebbels to break it off with Lída. When her movie, *The Gambler,* had its delayed première on October 28 in Berlin there were cat-calls in the auditorium. 'Lída Baarova was jeered,' Rudolf Likus minuted his chief, Ribbentrop. 'As from Monday the film has been scrapped.' Hanke stormed into the office of Alfred Greven, the general manager of Ufa studios, and there was a brawl between Hanke, and two SS men, 'because,' as Hanke wrote to Himmler, about his behaviour, 'he countered my allegations with a blatant untruth.'

Goebbels began to scribble a hagiographic book about Hitler, 'the product of his daily eavesdropping at table,' as Rosenberg sniffed in his diary. Himmler assured him that the book would never appear. As November began, Goebbels was casting around the disordered landscape for some way to wrest back Hitler's favour.

THE MUNICH CRISIS HAD FRAYED THE NERVES of some National Socialists. As they return to Gmund, Himmler revealed to Marga

surprising things about the weaker brethren round Hitler. 'Nowadays there are some folks without nerves,' she wrote. 'Without brains. It was awful. People you would never have expected!' She hesitated to commit names to paper. Göring perhaps? Göring had learned that his Luftwaffe was unready for war with Britain: it had only short-range bombers which, given the neutrality of Belgium and Holland, could not reach London. Nobody was criticising her husband. From all she heard, H. had been 'grand, and strong, and Ribbentrop too.'

THROUGHOUT THE EARLY autumn of 1938, to the despair of the German foreign ministry and the police authorities, the Party caused problems. Heydrich's *Judenreferat* opened a file entitled 'Outrages against Jews,' which identified the Party as being behind them: 'The Feuchtwangen Party District ordered the last three Jews out of Bechhofen, Franconia, on September 20. . . The manner of their eviction has caused deep indignation in the very religious-minded population.' Once again, Party thugs began attacking synagogues. Local Jews heckled an SS unit being mobilised in Neuwedell on the night of September 28: There were shouts of, 'The whole world is up in arms on account of a bunch of Sudeten-Germans!' On September 30 a mob destroyed a synagogue in Mellrichstadt, Franconia; windows were smashed in Jewish homes, and a textile shop was looted.

Profiting from Himmler's absence from Berlin throughout October, Dr Goebbels and Helldorff resumed their chicanery against the Jews. The violence spread to Vienna on October 4, when the Party began evicting Jews. Again this was not what Heydrich wanted. Eichmann's office negotiated with the Party's *Gauleitung*, presumably Odilo Globocnik, and stopped the mischief. Dr Weiler, leader of the Bavarian Jewish Community, protested to Baron Karl von Eberstein, Himmler's police chief, about the Party's seizure of synagogues for grain-storage. The synagogue in Leutershausen was damaged on October 16, that in Dortmund on the twenty-seventh, and at Zirndorf near Nuremberg on November 5. The disturbances spread to the south-west: urgent telexes poured in to Prinz-Albrecht-strasse about assaults on Jews in the Palatinate and about the Party's steps to expel them from Bergzabern and Landau. 'Jewish circles are

frantic about what's going on,' said one telex.

Heydrich and the *Sicherheitsdienst* could only watch. Himmler seems to have read none of these reports. On November 8, SD officials filed a four-page summary. The outrages were creating the unfortunate impression that Party and Gestapo were at loggerheads over the Jewish Question. The colossal damage to property bore little relation to any propaganda benefit, and the campaign was hampering emigration, the SD main leitmotif. Heydrich's office urged the Party to put a halt to these individual actions: but worse, far worse, was shortly to come.

Dr Goebbels pursued different aims. The campaign was going to plan, as Count von Helldorff privately assured him on the eleventh. The minutes of the Reich Defence Council sitting three days later devoted two pages to the *Entjudung*, 'dejudification,' of the economy. 'The Jews,' summarised Goebbels that day, 'are being hounded from country to country, reaping the fruits of their eternal intrigues, hate campaigns, and dirty tricks.'

New laws prohibited Jews from adopting non-Jewish names, from camouflaging their businesses as Aryan, and appointing straw men to run them. 'It turns out that a large number of Soviet Russians were officials in Jewish organisations,' reported Heydrich's Section II. As his Main Office summarised, 'the fact is that for Jews the only route that left is to emigrate.' At Switzerland's request a bold letter 'J' had to be stamped on Jews' passports from October 1938. Many had fled from Austria into Czecho-Slovakia (now hyphenated). There were already 259,000 Jews there, and Czecho-Slovakia was not pleased. France did not want any Jews either. After discussing the problem with French foreign minister Georges Bonnet, Ribbentrop informed Hitler that the French were considering resettling Jews in Madagascar, a thinly populated French colony in the Indian Ocean, the size of Germany.

THE MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM was Poland. One-tenth of Poland's population and one-third of Warsaw's was Jewish. When the Polish ambassador Józef Lipski visited the Berghof on September 20, Hitler mentioned the possibility of resettling Jews in the African colonies.

Lipski told his foreign minister he had assured Hitler, 'If you succeed in solving the Jewish problem, we shall erect a fine statue in Warsaw in your honour' – a promise which Poland did little to honour.

There was a more immediate problem. Twenty thousand Jews living in the Reich would lose Polish citizenship at the end of October because of the law introduced by Warsaw in March. On October 26 Himmler ordered the *Kriminalpolizei* to expel all Polish Jews before the deadline. The next day Dr Werner Best signed a 'lightning urgency' telex to all Gestapo chiefs ordering Polish Jews deported, timed to arrive at the Polish border on October 29.

Late on October 27 German police began the round-up, taking seventeen thousand Polish Jews, mostly males, to railroad collecting points and shunting them willy-nilly toward the Polish border. In Vienna, police arrested two to three thousand Polish Jews, of which only 176 had passports, and bundled them onto a special train bound for the Polish border; in Berlin, the police arrested three thousand males and handed them deportation orders. While cordons held back their womenfolk, the first train carrying seven hundred Jews left the East Station at 1:58 p.m. on Friday, October 28. The trains took eight or nine thousand Jews to Bentschen (now Zbąszyń), a frontier town some forty miles west of Poznań, five or six thousand to Beuthen (Bytom), and the remainder to Konitz (Chojnice) and Gdynia.

Here is one contemporary account, by a Jew plucked out of his home at nine p.m. that Thursday: 'Two men came from the *Kriminalpolizei*, demanded my passport, and then placed a deportation document before me to sign and ordered me to accompany them.' At four p.m. on Friday they were escorted to the station, given loaves of bread and margarine and loaded into freight cars. They reached the border at five p.m. on Saturday afternoon, but the Poles would not allow them in. The progress of this countrywide police operation can be traced in SD files. Stuttgart reported on Friday: across Württemberg they had picked up 280 Polish Jews: 'After strict examination by police doctors 176 of both sexes were found fit to travel and conveyed immediately by special train under police guard to Frankfurt-on-Oder.' Throughout that Friday reports tickertaped into Prinz-Albrechtstrasse: five hundred Jews from Munich, three or four hundred from Nuremberg,

twenty-five from Augsburg. German Red Cross nurses and Jewish doctors travelled with many of the trains, and the Jewish aid agency was ordered to provide food.

From midnight the next stage began, as the loaded freight-cars were pushed across the border into Poland. 'The Polish authorities are refusing to accept the Polish Jews,' telexed *Obersturmbannführer* Wilhelm Günther from *Oberabschnitt* South-East in Breslau later on Friday, October 28 to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. 'At present there are eight hundred Jews from Silesia and a transport from Leipzig stalled here at Beuthen. We're expecting further transports tonight, so that eight thousand Jews are on their way here. Using every available Gestapo officer, regular police, and 23 SS Regiment we're dumping them over the border tonight, on country roads, any routes we can.'

The Poles took measures to ward off this misfortune. The Germans rammed six thousand Polish Jews over the border near Gleiwitz. The Polish border authorities were able to turn back only 170. Warsaw sent armed forces to prevent the 'invasion,' and they did so using truncheons and bare fists, according to an SD report. 'Yesterday we shunted about 3,200 Jews across the unmarked border [*die grüne Grenze*],' reported the SD from Breslau that Saturday, 'and 1,700 more are following from locations in the Reich today.'

Thousands of hungry Jews shivered between the frontier posts. The *Daily Telegraph* and *Manchester Guardian* reported this on October 29, unable to choose sides; the truth was that nobody wanted the Jews. The *Forschungsamt* monitored the clamour. Italian radio reported, but omitted the detail that the Poles being expelled were Jews. By November 5 Prinz-Albrechtstrasse estimated that they had dumped seventeen thousand Jews back into Poland. Warsaw lamely threatened reprisals. In the light of History, however, the Jews expelled from Germany might think themselves fortunate to have got away.

WHAT WAS HEINRICH HIMMLER'S current position on the Jews? It was akin to apathy. He left the activism to Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. At the end of October 1938 he took up the case of Dr Heinz Adolf Brieger, on whose behalf Fritz Wiedemann, Hitler's adjutant, had plagued

him in August. This Jew had obtained a passport and already left, but Himmler thought it relevant to lay down a firm line: 'I share your view,' he wrote to Wiedemann, 'that, in the interest of promoting Jewish emigration, no obstacles ought to be placed in the way of those Jews willing to emigrate.'

Himmler and the Party veterans found themselves holding flags on opposite barriers when it came to the troublesome Jewish problem.

IN EARLIER YEARS Himmler had shifted from Gmund to Berlin at the end of the Nuremberg Rally in September, stayed in the capital until November and then gone south back to Munich for the 1923 putsch anniversary. GREEN had upset this timetable. More such operations were to follow, and Himmler was expanding his SS. On November 1 he met SS *Gruppenführer* Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, whom we shall encounter often again, at Trautenau to inspect the latest new SS units being raised. Trautenau (Czech: Trutnov) was another German town which the Munich agreement had restored to Germany.

Marga Himmler had driven on to Gmund after Munich and she would stay there in the lakeside villa, grousing and writing her diary, until October 28 when she returned to Berlin to take in the occasional theatre and sip tea with Countess von Wedel. Heini had gone down to Rome for the annual Italian police festival. He had a large following in Italy: 'It's a wonderful feeling, to know he's recognised like this,' Marga wrote, and she came down to meet him in Verona on his way back, full of memories of that vacation twelve months before.

Their vacation would begin right after the annual Party ceremonies in Munich. 'We're going to spend a few days in Salzburg,' she confided to her diary, 'and then on to Wiesbaden again,' – where their intellectual friend Richard Hildebrandt, a *Gruppenführer*, was chief of police. 'Lydia will come to stay with Püppi. As for the new cook,' she added, embellishing her humdrum life with the usual domestic sub-plots, 'she's been my worst mistake, and I am just waiting for her fourteen days trial to be up.'

Himmler worked on his friendship with Göring. For the christening of the field-marshal's first child, Edda, on November 4, the Reichsführer had a silver goblet and spoon inscribed. As Göring

took the sleeper back to Berlin a few days after the Party ceremony he saw the night sky alight, as fires blazed in Halle, and wondered.

It was the silver-tongued Dr Goebbels up to his mischief again.

UNFORTUNATELY GOEBBELS WAS indispensable. Hitler hoped that the June rampage in Berlin – which he had intervened to halt – had been just a momentary lapse. With the collaboration of the Jewish organisations, Eichmann's office in Vienna was processing the applications of eight hundred to one thousand Jews every day, issuing exit permits and passports – now stamped with the obligatory 'J.'

The focus briefly narrows to a penniless teenaged wastrel in Paris – Herschel Feibel Grynszpan. His father, a Polish tailor, had been among the thousands of Polish Jews wakened in Hanover early on October 28 and pushed aboard a train bound for Zbąszyń. He (or sister Berta, the records are in conflict) had written to the seventeen-year-old Herschel a postcard pleading for money. Still hiding in Paris, he received the card on November 3.

Somehow this Jewish teenager did come into money in Paris in these very days. Somebody gave him 250 French francs to buy a handgun and a suit, and checked him into the Hôtel de Suez in the Rue de Strasbourg, around the corner from the offices of LICA, the *Ligue Internationale Contre l'Antisémitisme*. LICA had already been 'of interest' to the police in the Gustloff murder in 1936. Police photos in 1938 show Grynszpan wearing a new designer raincoat, which facilitated his entrance into the German embassy building at No. 78, rue de Lille.

He walked over there on November 7 carrying an envelope addressed to his intended victim, the ambassador Count von Welczeck; that was a regular Jewish ploy in assassinations. Grynszpan actually spoke to Welczeck outside the building but, unrecognised, the count ducked inside, and survived what followed. Inside the building, twenty-nine year-old Ernst vom Rath, the embassy's third secretary, was less fortunate. When Grynszpan asked for the ambassador, Rath politely regretted that His Excellency was unavailable. The Jewish youth rewarded the defenceless diplomat with five bullets from the expensive handgun, pumped into his stomach.

THESE FIVE SHOTS IN Paris in November 1938 would echo around the world. Heydrich's *Sicherheitsdienst* shortly learned that Grynszpan had joined a Jewish seminary, the Thora yeshiva, in Frankfurt, in May 1935 but had dropped out in April 1936. The seminary was known to the SD as a 'reservoir of anti-state undesirables' even before Hitler came to power; it was also registering students solely for visa purposes, a not unfamiliar racket. In mid-September 1936 Herschel had entered France via Belgium, taking a rush-hour workers' streetcar from Quiévrain to Valenciennes, two towns straddling the frontier. He lived illegally with his uncle Abraham Grynszpan, another Polish tailor, and his aunt, *née* Chana Berenbaum, in Paris. That was all the SD could find out. As recently as August 1938 France had ordered Grynszpan deported, as his passport had expired in February.

He had gone underground until this embassy shooting on November 7. The French held Grynszpan in custody, with his victim's life still in the balance, and arrested the uncle and aunt as accessories. The *Sûreté* established that Grynszpan had planned the act for some time (the October expulsions have provided a useful alibi for History). The *Petit Parisien* reported that he told the police only his regrets 'that the guy's not dead,' but that may be just a journalistic flourish. The investigating magistrate found in Grynszpan's wallet a card written to his father on November 7, but not posted: in it he declared his intention of 'making a gesture' and then killing himself. He admitted that it was not his first visit to the embassy.

The crime was political, so he could not be extradited. The police concluded that somebody had groomed him for this job: but how had he got the money? It is no concern of ours, so we must leave it.

Grynszpan himself remained in Fresnes prison, in Paris. The SD ordered all sub-sections to keep a watch on the cross-border contacts of Jewish bodies in Germany so as to keep abreast of 'their plans.' When Grynszpan duly appeared in a Paris court it was with *seven* lawyers. LICA instructed Maître Vincent de Moro-Giafferi, a famously expensive criminal lawyer, to represent him, and he showed at the police station just hours later. He had acted for Gustloff's murderer David Frankfurter in 1936. The defence lawyers were oddly confident in securing an acquittal – but Hitler's CASE YELLOW in 1940 threw a

spanner in the works, obliging the French to move Grynszpan and other prisoners out of Paris. After France's surrender, German police raided Giafferi's office. His files listed the visitors Grynszpan received in jail and revealed that the defence was funded by the American writer Dorothy Thompson, and there was bickering between lawyers over who should pocket the cash.

The world's press made hay with one juicy smear, as an intercepted message revealed to the SD that the word in the City of London was that Grynszpan was a homosexual, who had just ended a sexual relationship with Vom Rath. It might explain why the embassy had admitted Grynszpan readily. But it was a Jewish smear; he had *asked and carried a letter for Welczek, the ambassador*, not Rath at all. It was not true; but it seemed likely to be the defence pleaded by Giafferi.

So Grynszpan escaped trial. A catastrophe began, from which few Jews emerged unscathed. Finally brought to Germany on July 16, 1940, he languished in Himmler's prisons, under a pseudonym less fragile than his real name. He was last seen alive in late January 1945, in Brandenburg Prison, registered as 'Prisoner No. 3,520/44 Otto Schneider, born March 28, 1921.' Neither name figures on the list of VIP Prisoners collected in Dachau in April 1945.

His parents survived: deported in October 1938 to Poland, they wandered on to Russia, and finally to Israel, where they surfaced to testify in the show trial of Adolf Eichmann. No, they had not heard from Herschel since 1938. (As an indicted criminal, he would have faced trial in post-war Germany.) With brazen chutzpah in the circumstances, in 1958 they asked a Hanover court to declare him dead, so they could claim financial compensation from Bonn. The court granted a certificate of presumed death on June 1, 1960.

WHILE THE SICHERHEITSDIENST pursued its inquiries, his victim fought for his life in a Paris hospital, attended by Hitler's surgeons. The SD closed its report with the words, 'Not despatched, as overtaken by the events of November 9, 1938.'

'This thing with the Jews,' sighed Marga in her diary, as their vacation began. 'When will this scum leave us alone, so we can start to live out our lives?'

36: *The Big Night*

THE *VÖLKISCHER BEOBACHTER* buried the story of a pistol attack on a minor German diplomat on an inside page. Anti-Jewish disturbances continued in the provinces – the distant rumble of departing storms. Berlin's police chief Count von Helldorff told the press on November 8, 1938 that in recent weeks they had seized from Berlin's Jews alone 3,569 blades and knives, 1,702 firearms, and twenty thousand rounds of ammunition. Propaganda dropped the ball.

Attention was still focused on the Polish Jews. That day the Polish ambassador raised the matter with Ribbentrop's urbane deputy, Ernst von Weizsäcker. 'One thing we definitely shall not settle for,' dictated Weizsäcker, 'is having a bunch of forty to fifty thousand stateless, formerly Polish, Jews dropped into our lap.' Lipski talked of the 'sacrifice' if Poland had to take them back; apoplectic at that, Weizsäcker reminded him that these folks were 'Polish property,' and that the Paris shooting might well make things worse for them.

As the life of Vom Rath, Grynszpan's victim, painfully guttered to an end, Hitler promoted him to Embassy Secretary, to ensure an enhanced pension for his widow – and Dr Goebbels pricked up his ears. It seemed there was mileage in this after all.

He and his seedy pal Helldorff had travelled down to Munich for the fifteenth anniversary of the Putsch. With the Party worthies pouring

into the Bavarian capital for the ceremonies on November 8 and 9, the press and radio clamour about the Paris shooting began, blaming it with one voice on Judea, the 'international criminal Jewish rabble.'

AT THREE P.M. ON November 8 Himmler spoke to his *Gruppenführer*, in the mess of the *Standarte* 'Deutschland' in the suburb of Freimann. He spoke of his resolve to enhance their nation's bloodstock by bringing in more Germanic blood – by hook or by crook, one might say: 'I intend to go get Germanic blood, robbing and stealing it where I can.' It was the kind of sentence that might not ring well if spoken by prosecuting counsel. He warned they were faced by ten years of unprecedented ideological battles – with Judea, freemasonry, Marxism, and the churches. (Heydrich, sitting in the front row, recognised the same four enemies, though in reverse sequence.) 'These forces – I consider the Jews to be the driving spirit, the origin of all the Evil – know full well that if Germany and Italy are not eradicated, then *they* will be eradicated.'

In Germany, he said, the Jews would not be able to hold out for ever. 'Italy is following the same path, and Poland too.' Other states might not be anti-Semitic yet but soon would be, 'the moment our Jewish émigrés arrive there and take up their typical occupations.' He meant pickpocketing, fraud, pornography, usury, and money changing. Palestine was already engaged in a desperate struggle against the Jews. They would see only one solution, to ensure that Germany, 'the originating country of anti-Semitism,' was destroyed. 'If we are defeated, there will be no refuge remaining for the Germans. . . Starved out and butchered. That will be the fate of everyone, be he an enthusiastic supporter of the Third Reich now, or not – it will suffice that he speaks German and had a German mother.'

Hitler spoke briefly to his disciples in the historic Bürgerbräu beerhall. Soon after midday on the ninth he joined Party veterans for their solemn march from this beerhall, crowding through one narrow archway en route and then tramping on to the Feldherrnhalle with Himmler in the front rank of marchers; it was the same ritual each year. At midnight he would present his SS to the world and swear in the new intake, in a spectacular ceremony at the Feldherrnhalle.

Viktor Lutze grumbled to Goebbels – 'not entirely unjustly,' the latter agreed, 'but it's part jealousy too. Himmler really has achieved something.'

Himmler, Heydrich, Karl Wolff and the SS brass had checked into the Four Seasons hotel, quite high up, along with Hitler's adjutants. Goebbels retired, to work on his Hitler biography, hoping to get back into Hitler's favour.

That afternoon there were again rumbles of distant thunder: at three p.m. in Dessau, and four hours later in Chemnitz, somebody had torched Jewish buildings. Then word came that Vom Rath had died of his injuries at five-thirty p.m. 'That does it,' Goebbels wrote.

Using the Party's propaganda network he issued teleprinter directives to all thirty-nine Gaus to stage demos against local Jewish properties together with SA Brownshirts in plain clothes. It would be a repetition of June 1938: if things went right, he could take the limelight right off Himmler's midnight SS spectacular.

THE FOUR SEASONS WAS within spitting distance of a synagogue but Himmler neither knew nor cared. After lunch at the hotel he took Wolff out to Gmund to relax by the lake for an hour or two. The next day, the tenth, his vacation would begin; in fact Karl Wolff called it Heini's annual 'hibernation.' As the police chief of Munich, Baron von Eberstein, loftily recalled, Himmler left it to others to raise the SS *Sturmbanne* and regiments, and just turned up to inspect them and satisfy himself that they came up to scratch. Tonight's Feldherrnhalle ceremony was the climax – Heini's big night.

Karl Wolff would normally go over to the Führer's nearby apartment toward midnight, to escort him to the Residence, where Himmler was waiting. On the last stroke of midnight, the great gates would swing open and Hitler would step forth for the ceremony. The new SS men, trained, drilled, and spotless, had arrived by train and omnibus from all over the country. Graded by size and height, with rifles and helmets, three or four thousand new SS troops would have formed up in this same historic square, where the carbines of the Bavarian police had felled sixteen of the Party faithful in 1923. At midnight Himmler would recite their oath to them, line by line, and in chorus

the thousands would roar the words back to him. Then these new regiments would march off, to the banging of drums and the blare of trumpets, under the admiring eyes of thousands of wives, fiancées, parents, and spectators – the diplomats and the wealthy industrialists and Friends of the Reichsführer had of course privileged viewing stands. Like any trooping ceremony or passing-out parade, it was timed to the minute. It would normally roll out like clockwork.

EARLY THAT EVENING there was a banquet for the Party's Old Guard and Lutze's Brownshirt veterans in the Old City Hall. Hitler did not intend to stay long. He had little time for the Party now: he would be overheard saying to Martin Bormann, Rudolf Hess's successor, in 1941, 'Your job will be to keep the Gauleiters off my back.' Himmler was entitled to attend, but he was no more fond of these Party grizzlies than Hitler. Goebbels did come however. A messenger brought word to him confirming that Vom Rath had died. He whispered something to Hitler, perhaps about the fresh demonstrations in the provinces. Before he left the hall, Hitler ruled that the demonstrations should run their course and the police be pulled back. If really used, the phrase which Goebbels wrote, '*Polizei zurückziehen*,' could have had uglier connotations, but *holding* police back is standard in some public-violence scenarios, to avoid pouring oil on flames. Later signals that night indeed show police authorities as late as four a.m. ordering their officers *held back in readiness*.

'That is proper,' noted Goebbels, commenting in his diary. 'I issue appropriate directives to the police and Party at once.' (These words also need careful parsing. Goebbels could not issue directives to the police.) His motives were clear: by one spectacular deed he might restore relations with the Führer, soured by his adulterous affair.

Hitler was not a witness of the fiery harangue which Goebbels would deliver to this rambunctious audience of beer-sozzled Party veterans at the City Hall. Calling for silence, the minister announced the death of their diplomat in Paris, blamed Judea, referred approvingly to the day's demonstrations as 'spontaneous' public anger, and invited the Party to organise more while keeping a low profile. The Jews were fair game, he suggested, and the SA Brownshirts would have a free

hand against them. (He had not consulted Lutze about using the SA any more than he had consulted Himmler before 'issuing directives' to the police.) The Jews, he frolicked, should be given a taste of the people's anger. 'Storms of applause,' he told his diary. 'Everybody makes a beeline for the telephones. Now the people will act.'

There were, he noticed, some voices of disapproval from 'a few softies,' but 'I whip them all on.' Munich's Gauleiter Adolf Wagner trembled for 'his Jewish shops,' as Goebbels sneered. The chief of the Party court, Walter Buch, Himmler's neighbour down at Tegernsee, was another – he slipped out 'because things were getting altogether too gaudy for my liking,' he said, recalling the speech years later.

The most gnarled veterans tumbled out into the streets looking for the synagogue to attack: writing it up the next day, after an unexpected scolding by Hitler, Goebbels adds a romance which was certainly not true: 'I try to save it from the flames. But fail.' In fact he put through a phone call to Werner Wächter, chief of his Berlin propaganda agency, to destroy Berlin's biggest synagogue at No. 79 Fasanenstrasse, and that building was shortly being consumed by flames. The Party's Supreme Court, seized with this matter later, found that at this dinner Goebbels had issued 'oral instructions' which officials present had understood to suggest that he had the absent Hitler's authority to act, and that this provided sufficient mitigation in law for the atrocities which followed.

The beer-sodden Party leaders stumbled out into the night to meet at various locations, including the Schottenhammel. An unnamed member of the Party's national directorate assembled Gauleiters here and issued more detailed directions.

At ten-thirty p.m. one of them, the porky Gauleiter of Schleswig-Holstein, Hinrich Lohse, telephoned his chief of staff in Kiel: 'A Jew has fired a shot. A German diplomat is dead. There are in Friedrichstadt, Kiel, and Lübeck wholly superfluous places of congregation; and these people are still trading in shops in our midst. We don't need either the one or the other. There's to be no plundering. There's to be no manhandling either. Foreign Jews are not to be molested. If there's any resistance, use your firearms. The whole operation is to be in plain clothes and is to be over by five a.m.'

Goebbels went over to the Party's local headquarters and issued more instructions, 'setting out what can be done and what not.' The Party's national propaganda directorate (RPL), started issuing orders for a pogrom. Some SA orders even used Hitler's name ('The Führer wants the police not to intervene'). The Munich state police (Gestapo) office received one such RPL order and, evidently perplexed, called Heydrich at the Four Seasons. No less baffled, the *Gruppenführer* hurried up to Karl Wolff's room looking for Himmler.

Himmler was not there, however – he was already over in Hitler's apartment. 'Wölfchen' set out by car to ask him what was going on. Then Prinz-Albrechtstrasse stirred, startled by the same RPL instruction from Munich. An urgent teleprint carrying *Standartenführer* Heinrich Müller's name and addressed to every district Gestapo office went out just before midnight, ordering Stapo officers to keep out of the demonstrations, while protecting Jewish property from looters. It added an odd command: 'Stand by to take about twenty to thirty thousand Jews into custody, primarily selecting wealthy Jews. Further instructions will be issued during the night.'

HEINRICH HIMMLER HAD DRIVEN OVER to Hitler's Munich apartment an hour ahead of his midnight SS ceremony. He was already packed for his vacation, but tectonic plates were beginning to move. Arrayed in black ceremonial uniform, complete with sword and dagger, Himmler made small talk with his Führer.

The apartment was at No. 16, Prinzregentenplatz. On the ground floor, to the left, was housed Hitler's police unit; his adjutants were housed on the floor above, and his private apartment above that. His original seven rooms had been redesigned and combined with the apartment next door. The carpets were simple, but the walls were hung with paintings by famous masters like Spitzweg, Grützner, and Waldmüller. There was a library on architecture, and the piano he had played until Geli Raubal's death by suicide in this apartment; stricken with remorse he left her room unchanged since then.

Himmler kept an eye on the clock. Across town, in the chill darkness of the night, the SS regiments were still packing into the square in front of the Feldherrnhalle and forming up with polished helmets,

black finery, and military precision, standing on the hallowed ground where the Ludendorff–Hitler putsch had sown their Dragons' Teeth fifteen years before. It would be surprising if anything went wrong.

At eleven-thirty p.m., there was a loud knocking at the door, and he heard Hitler's housekeeper Mrs Winter saying: 'The Reichsführer? – Yes, he is here with the Führer.' Himmler will have recognised the slightly nasal *hochdeutsch* of Karl Wolff: 'Would you be so good as to say that I'd like to speak with him urgently for a moment.' Himmler stepped out into the corridor. Wolff saluted, arm outstretched at the prescribed angle. He had hurtled over from the Four Seasons, he said, at the urgent request of Heydrich. There was disturbing news from Müller at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, reports of mayhem nationwide – hundreds of Jewish buildings. The violence was clearly orchestrated.

Himmler reeled. '*Ach, du lieber Gott*!' he exclaimed – 'For God's sake!' People would be blaming him. He was chief of police. SS *Standartenführer* Müller in Berlin, said Wolff, was inquiring the Führer's pleasure.

'Wait here,' said Himmler, 'I'll speak with the Führer.' He vanished and returned almost at once, beckoning to Wolff.

Wolff repeated everything to Hitler: it appeared to be the handiwork of the Party and SA. Himmler glanced at the clock. Nearly midnight.

It was a tough decision for Hitler. He had turned the SS loose on the SA once before, he said: he could not do that again. He loped up and down the room, snapping his fingers, a habit he had. If there was mayhem on the streets the mob would not heed orders. The reputation of the SS and his own aura of infallibility was at risk. He turned to Himmler: 'Keep my SS right out of this.' He snapped his fingers again: 'Make sure the fires are contained and don't spread out of control.' Further than that, it seemed, he dared not go.

The news just worsened after that. Hitler's adjutant Nicholas von Below phoned up from downstairs to say that the Four Seasons front desk was suggesting that the adjutants come and retrieve their baggage, as the synagogue right next door was ablaze, and sparks were flying right over the building. Dr Karl Brandt always lived in that hotel. He said, 'Ought we to drive over or not?' 'Well one of us ought at least to go and take a look.'

More calls came in from all over Munich. The phone did not stop ringing. Shortly the word was that the synagogue had not caught fire by itself, but had been set on fire. There was a demonstration going on. Hitler phoned the Munich police chief, Baron von Eberstein. He trusted this SS *Obergruppenführer* for the efficiency he displayed on occasions like Mussolini's 1937 state visit.

'What's going on?' rasped Hitler. 'Find out! I have to know.'

With rising anger, as Major von Below described to us, Hitler shouted: 'I demand that order is restored at once!' – meaning in Munich; he knew nothing of the other cities.

Goebbels! Hitler phoned him for answers. He sent Julius Schaub out to stop the looting, and ordered special protection to Bernheimer's, the famous antique dealers. In Berlin, Munich, Kassel, and other cities Brown mobs were in the streets, and flames were licking into ancient buildings, devouring priceless archives and religious artefacts, before the Gestapo or regular police could move to rescue them. Ordinary Germans stood by, aghast at what they were seeing. The clatter of broken glass punctuated the night, and cries of human pain too.

Himmler checked the time. It was midnight, time to move.

THIS WAS TO HAVE BEEN A GLIMPSE of the future – these fine, fit, eager young men that he was presenting to his Führer at the Feldherrnhalle. Now however the flames of an uglier future were flickering and leaping above the rooftops of most every city in the country.

Major von Below told us in an interview recorded fifty years ago that Hitler was in the clear. 'We all, and even Hitler, were totally *im Muspott*, in the dark, nobody knew. I can only say, from my many years with Hitler a charade on that scale would have been impossible!'

Goebbels later told his diary that it was only as he was leaving the ceremony that he noticed the fiery glare above the Munich skyline. He went to Party headquarters to read the first reports coming in – fifty synagogues ablaze, then more. 'The Führer has ordered the immediate arrest of twenty to thirty thousand Jews,' he scribbled in his diary pages. Hitler was demanding to speak with him. 'In every German city the synagogues are ablaze,' wrote the minister, before speaking with Hitler. He added a more chastened note, evidently

after they had spoken: 'German property is not endangered.' It was a lie, but an indication that he was hearing wiser counsels.

HIMMLER WAS BACK in his suite at the Four Seasons around one a.m. He had ordered all SS units confined to barracks. He dictated to Rudi Brandt a cautiously phrased four-page order for Heydrich to telex immediately to all Gestapo offices: their men were to be limited to arresting looters, and safeguarding lives and Jewish assets. The order explained that Goebbels's agencies were running this show. Where synagogues were already burning, fire-brigades were to protect neighbouring buildings and non-Jewish shops. The SD was to take to safety the historical materials of synagogues and Jewish communities. The police were to escort into custody as many fit young male Jews as they had room for, preferably wealthy (and they were not to be 'maltreated' either). Heydrich telephoned the order to his local Gestapo teleprinter room. It went out from Munich over his signature to every Gestapo and SD sub-office at 1:20 a.m.

After that, Himmler called the SS district commanders (*Oberabschnittsführer*) to his suite and repeated the orders to them. Over the next hour, until two-thirty a.m., these officers, all *Obergruppenführer*, took turns using a phone in the room of SS-*Sturmbannführer* Luitpold Schallermeier, Wolff's personal assistant, to pass it to their home areas.

It is not easy to untangle the jumble of signals flashing across the country that night. In none of them is Hitler or Himmler seen encouraging any pogrom. Heydrich and Müller both belatedly realised that somebody was messing with them. During the night Hitler's fury became evident. Rudolf Hess telexed a three-line ordinance, No. 174/38, at 2:56 a.m. to every provincial Party headquarters: 'On express orders issued at the very highest level,' which was Party jargon for Hitler himself, 'there is to be no arson or the like, whatever, under any circumstances, against Jewish businesses.'

Hinting at a widening discord between Himmler and the all-powerful Party leadership, the Gestapo issued a telex from Berlin to its sub-offices at 3:45 a.m. demanding instant compliance with an order of Heydrich, which laid down:

1. Pursuant to the latest orders, all and any acts whatever of arson are to be prevented, in conformity with political leaders.
2. All relevant orders already issued or being issued are to be classified as SECRET.

All sub-offices were to acknowledge to his teleprinter in Munich (No. 47,767) receipt of this telex, and submit two detailed situation reports to Section II in Prinz-Albrechtstrasse by five and seven a.m.

SOME AUTOPSIES ARE more difficult to perform than others. Conformist historians disregard at their peril inconvenient documents, if they don't fit their comfort zone, like these ones timed 2:56 a.m. and 3:45 a.m. They willingly ignore the elements of time and distance in reconstructing events. That night, November 9–10, 1938, chaos was spreading like a bloodstain across Germany's police networks, as a babel of conflicting orders and reports tumbled to and fro by radio, telephone, and teleprinter, typed, retyped, encoded, and copied to lesser units, held up by system-delays, and then found to be at variance with later and conflicting orders arriving faster by different channels or from other authorities.

That Goebbels, as a *Reichsleiter*, had used Party networks to issue orders to Himmler's police made things worse. Müller issued orders to his Gestapo sub-offices, and these were still trickling down to units like Krefeld two hours later, at two a.m.; but everything had long been thrown into reverse. 'The order for cessation of protest demonstrations is expected very shortly,' read one signal signed by Müller in the morning hours. 'Arrests by the State Police will continue however and means will be assured for the speediest transfer of prisoners to the concentration camps.'

At about three a.m., Himmler stalked into Schallermeier's room and dictated an extraordinary *aide mémoire* on the evening's events. This was its gist: 'On November 9, I was with the Führer when toward eleven-thirty p.m. *Gruppenführer* Wolff came to me and informed me of orders issued by the Gau Propaganda Office in Munich.'

Himmler's note continued,

> I asked the Führer what orders he had for me. The Führer replied that the SS should keep out of this *Aktion*. The Stapo offices were to take care of safeguarding Jewish property and the protection of the Jews. The Regular SS who remained in barracks were to be called in for protective measures only if necessary. I immediately passed on this Führer order to *Gruppenführer* Heydrich for the Stapo offices and to the *Oberabschnittsführer* for the Regular SS.
>
> When I asked the Führer, I had the impression that he knew nothing about all this. The order came from the Reich Propaganda Directorate and I suspect that it is Goebbels, in his empty-headedness [*Hohlköpfigkeit*] and lust for power (which has been obvious to me for some time), who has triggered this action right now, at the worst possible time from a foreign policy standpoint.

Schallermeier typed it up. Himmler signed it, folded it into an envelope, sealed it with his signet ring, and handed it to Schallermeier for safekeeping: so Schallermeier later testified.

HAVING FIXED THE BLAME on the 'empty-headed' Goebbels, Himmler washed his hands of the affair and started his vacation to Austria. We need not in this biography concern ourselves with more than an outline of the rest of this appalling story.

Still in turmoil over the matrimonial warfare and Himmler's sniping, and taken aback at the unexpected universal condemnation, Goebbels painted into his diary a damaging but fictitious picture of a Führer encouraging the anti-Jewish outrages in advance and endorsing them in hindsight. The opposite is evident. Synagogues had been torched – nine in Berlin alone – businesses wrecked, and acres of plate-glass smashed at a painful cost (it was imported from Belgium). German insurers would pick up the Jewish bills. Homes had been invaded, women raped, and ninety people murdered.

Himmler had left on his vacation. If Goebbels thought things could get no worse, he was wrong. Hitler intervened to order a halt to his handiwork. He demanded to see see him immediately at the 'Osteria Bavaria,' his regular Munich watering-hole. To his diary, Goebbels lied. 'He is in agreement with everything,' he recorded (unusually

writing it up immediately, instead of on the next day). 'His views are quite radical and aggressive. The *Aktion* itself went off without a hitch. A hundred dead. But no German property damaged.' (Each of these five sentences was untrue.)

Fritz Wiedemann, one of the older adjutants, saw Goebbels on the phone frantically trying to halt the conflagration – but such things are easier to start than to stop. Shaken by the frostiness of his reception by Hitler, Goebbels spent the morning trying to bottle the vile genie he had unleashed. At half-hour intervals throughout the day the radio transmitted orders for the mayhem to stop. Goebbels issued a directive to all gauleiters stating: 'The anti-Jewish operations must now be switched off with the same rapidity as they erupted. They have fulfilled the desired purpose.'

IT WAS OF COURSE a terrible setback to a nation's history. In five years, Adolf Hitler had achieved a string of diplomatic triumphs: although but a lowly Austrian, he had reunited this divided nation; he had regained by simple plebiscite the stolen Saar territory, he had revived conscription, he had defied their manifold enemies by remilitarising the German Rhineland, and he had resumed rearmament. Impartial as between German or Jewish or Negro contestants, Hitler had presided over the 1936 Berlin Olympiad; he had joined Austria with Germany, and wiped out crushing unemployment, and he had only recently retrieved for Germany her amputated Sudeten territories. Now a brainless mob – hiding their Brown shirts and Party emblems on the orders of the crippled Dr Goebbels – had trashed National Socialist Germany's reputation with one nocturnal rampage, and this would go down against him, Hitler, as its Führer, for all time.

As for Himmler, the Reich chief of police, the image he had been building of the strong, orderly, prosperous, law-abiding new Germany, in which the criminals had been locked away and the usurers and fraudsters deprived of their liberty, was *bouleversé*. If Himmler consoled himself that Goebbels had surely hammered the last nails into his own coffin, he was rudely cheated of this hope. Goebbels would creep back into Hitler's favour again, but later. What was this hold that Goebbels had over his Führer?

ARRIVING BACK IN BERLIN after the pogrom Hitler told Hermann Göring to find a solution for this intractable conundrum, the Jewish problem. 'The Jewish question must now, once and for all, be co-ordinated or solved one way or the other,' were the words Hitler used to him.

Goebbels called a press conference in Berlin on the eleventh, and ran the gauntlet of a hundred and fifty jeering foreign journalists. He wrestled with his diary, trying to find ways of concealing all this from posterity. He continued to pretend that he had Hitler's backing. In one telling slip of the pen, he scribbled in his handwriting on November 17, after Hitler returned to Berlin. 'He's in fine fettle. Sharply against the Jews. Thoroughly endorses my, and our, policies' – he had written *my* before he could stop himself, and to have altered the word to *our* would have given the game away.

Foreign diplomats blamed him. Count von Welczeck, recalled to Düsseldorf for the state funeral of Vom Rath – which might so easily have been his own – told the British ambassador on his return to Paris that Goebbels was the culprit, and that even Himmler was opposed to this persecution of the Jews: 'Count Welczek said,' wired the Briton to London, 'that he had heard this from several well-informed sources in Germany.' Britain's consul in Geneva said that Goebbels hoped to regain the limelight, which Göring had monopolised since Munich. His colleague in Munich reported that Goebbels and Gauleiter Wagner had arranged twenty mass meetings against the Jews for the night of the tenth in Munich, but that the Gestapo had objected. The British consul in Cologne sniffed that the pogrom was 'engineered by the Party, assisted by a mob who are always willing to loot.'

Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes reported that every Berliner he met had disapproved. His colleague in Munich echoed this. 'A holder of the *Blut-Orden* [a German award] met a Jewish friend . . . stopped him [and] shook hands. The Jew suggested that this was indiscreet and the German might lose his *Blut-Orden*. The other said: "I resigned from the Party yesterday" and produced from his pocket a copy of his very strongly worded letter of resignation.' This Munich diplomat knew of cases where SS and SA men had sheltered Jews, to show that 'das Deutsche Volk' had no part in it – 'it is only Goebbels and his gang.'

'A childlike faith in the Führer and a conviction that he had nothing to do with the Pogrom subsists,' reported the Englishman to London.

In northern cities like Hamburg the young Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann was more civilised, and the Party had ignored Goebbels's call for violence. The British consul-general reported that all classes there had expressed disgust. 'No attacks were made on Jewish homes and very few cases of personal violence are reported. In making arrests the police [were] . . . polite and in some cases almost apologetic.'

THE *KRISTALLNACHT* RAMPAGE HAD CREATED serious disruptions for the SD. Among those taken into temporary custody during the night – they were released over the next weeks – were not only Oskar Gerstle, the Munich lawyer to whom Himmler had delivered his father's letter in 1922, but the directors of Jewish retraining camps, *Umschulungs–lager*, which the SD had established to qualify Jews to immigrate to Palestine. The national Jewish body pleaded for their release, and Heydrich's Section II agreed, 'as we must without fail maintain the prerequisites and preparations for an orderly emigration procedure.' By the end of 1938 more than half the young Jews in Germany had been retrained as artisans, manual workers, and farmers.

In Vienna, many of Eichmann's Jewish collaborators had again been arrested that night, and their offices, correspondence, and indexes destroyed by mobs. Eichmann secured the release of his collaborators and started all over. By December 15 his now three-month-old emigration agency in Vienna had 'helped' 66,848 Jews to leave; by January 1, 1939 the number who had left Austria would total eighty-five thousand. The residue in Austria was dwindling at the rate of six hundred per day.

By October 1940, when the programme was halted, Hitler's Reich had virtually painlessly got rid of two-thirds of its Jews, including 300,000 from Germany, 130,000 from Austria, and thirty thousand from Bohemia and Moravia. They had been relieved of much treasure, including a collective punishment imposed for the murder of Vom Rath. As things turned out, as before, those who had fled to safety would prove more fortunate than those who stayed behind.

SPEAKING IN HIMMLER'S name, Karl Wolff left nobody in doubt of the SS view on all this. To Hafiz Khan, the British vice-president of the Muslim League, he admitted that Germany had morally 'lost a battle.' When Professor Carl Burckhardt, the High Commissioner in Danzig, called at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse in mid-November to express his fears of a pogrom in that territory too, Wolff spoke of his disgust, 'Something will have to happen,' Burckhardt recorded him saying. 'The one responsible is Goebbels, who has an intolerable influence on the Führer. We had hoped . . . for some time to bring him down and we were sure we had him, but once again the Führer has saved him. Things cannot go on like this.'

There was no doubt as to this. Addressing a National Socialist political academy (Napola) in December, Heydrich made no secret of his anger that Goebbels had blithely issued orders to *his* police. Kurt Daluege told Hess that there was now 'nationwide antipathy' to Dr Goebbels. Hess 'pointed to Goebbels as the actual originator,' as the former ambassador Ulrich von Hassell noted in his diary. 'Goebbels has seldom found less credibility than for his claim that a "spontaneous outburst of public rage" led to the violence.' 'Is Goebbels losing touch with reality?' speculated Darré.

Alfred Rosenberg told Himmler it had damaged the state. 'Damage to public property: 600 millions, about the same as two years' Winter Relief.' He quoted Himmler as saying: 'Yes, and now the blame is pushed onto others.' 'For everything G. does,' chimed in Rosenberg, 'we have to foot the bill. Frightful.' Goebbels and Himmler were not on speaking terms. 'Row with Himmler over his solstice ceremonies,' Goebbels wrote on December 13. 'I tell him to do as he pleases.' 'Even at home, opinions diverge sharply,' wrote Lutze.

IMPERVIOUS TO THE documentary evidence, a platoon of conformist German historians has blamed Hitler. They make little effort to prove their case, as the late Professor Hans Mommsen commented. Those who write otherwise in modern Germany risk imprisonment; in Austria even more so. Hitler wasted not one word on the pogrom speaking to editors on the tenth. His undoing was his failure to rein in those whom Himmler had labelled the 'empty-heads.'

Hitler had stayed clear of the pogrom, but he could not duck responsibility. It had happened on his watch; worse, he signally failed to reprimand Goebbels in public, he was willingly seen with him over the next few days and even stayed briefly at his Berlin villa while the Chancellery underwent final renovations.

THERE WAS A POSTSCRIPT to all this. A disgruntled Swiss theology student, twenty-two, had obtained a ticket to the Press stand sited just before the narrow archway in Munich through which the procession passed on November 9, 1938: ideal for an assassin, as Hitler himself had remarked. The student, Maurice Bavaud, had taken his seat in the front row, pretending to be a journalist, with a loaded Schmeisser semi-automatic pistol in his pocket. At the last minute, as the Führer marched past, the SA men lining the street raised a forest of arms in salute, denying the would-be assassin the clear shot he needed.

Undismayed, Bavaud tried again a few days later, on the Obersalzberg – Hitler was known to walk down the hill to meet tourists as they trooped past; but he had already gone back to Berlin.

A failure, Bavaud headed back to Switzerland – only to be arrested by railway police at Augsburg for travelling without a ticket. A loser by any account, he was unable to explain the empty envelope addressed to the Führer, or for that matter the still loaded Schmeisser in his pocket. He had hoped to get close enough to Hitler with the one, he confessed, and to shoot him with the other, 'as a danger to Roman Catholicism.' Hitler brooded later about 'these fanatics who have been groomed for their actions by dastardly priests.' The guillotine at Plötzensee put an end to Bavaud and his story on May 14, 1941.

At about the same hour as Himmler's police were making that arrest in Augsburg, another malcontent, a Swabian cabinet-maker, was stalking round the deserted Bürgerbräu beerhall in Munich. He found it surprisingly easy to get in: there was no guard at night. The cabinet-maker noticed a hollow, wood-panelled pillar just behind where Hitler always spoke. That seemed quite inviting.

37: *Elegant*

HIMMLER WAS OVER THE HILLS and far away. He had gone on vacation with Marga, leaving Hitler to tear strips off Dr Goebbels. On November 10, 1938 they checked into the 'Österreichischer Hof' in Salzburg for a week, and we find them exploring the romantic city, until her painful feet cried out. On Saturday he went up the Gross-Glockner; and they called at Alois Rehrl's farm in Fridolfing, where he had been an apprentice eighteen years before – '*very* nice,' she commented, with perhaps a touch of sarcasm. On Monday the fourteenth he was off hunting on the Krupp preserve. In his absence, Göring had banged heads together in Berlin, as Hitler had demanded. The pogrom had seen murder, arson, and property-damage across Germany and Austria, and the new Sudeten territories too.

In private, Hitler renewed concern over any undisciplined approach to 'the Jewish problem.' He had telephoned Göring, demanding that all measures be centralised in one hand; The field-marshal convened a conference on Saturday the twelfth, which was after Himmler went on leave. Heydrich ordered Eichmann, his emigration expert, to come too. Göring lectured them like schoolboys: 'I am sick and tired of these demonstrations,' he cried, and bellowed at Dr Goebbels: 'I buy most of my artworks from Jewish dealers.' The mobs had trashed seven thousand Jewish stores, which meant a major shortfall of tax

revenues from them. German insurers would have to cough up, and the looted merchandise was often German-owned, too. 'I wish you'd done in two hundred Jews and not destroyed such assets.'

'Thirty-five,' said Heydrich coldly: 'It's thirty-five dead. The problem [is], not how to get the rich Jews out, but the Jewish *mob*,' the penniless and unemployed scroungers. He demanded that at very least they be required to wear some distinguishing badge.

'My dear Heydrich,' scoffed Göring, 'you're not going to get anywhere without erecting ghettos in the cities.' He signed a slew of decrees that day, levying a fine of one billion marks on the Jewish community for the murder of Vom Rath (which might seem unjust given that his murderer was a Pole living in France).

Goebbels and Helldorff followed with ordinances of their own, banning Jews from theatres, concerts, lectures, movies, and dances, and declaring their tenancies no longer protected. Darré heard Göring call the pogrom 'a bloody outrage.' Göring's sister Ilse heard him blame Dr Goebbels. 'The rest of them are tolerable. Himmler himself is quite unimportant and basically harmless.'

UNIMPORTANT THE YOUNG Reichsführer was not. His special forces were already infiltrating Slovakia in preparation for Hitler's next move. He was rising in Hitler's esteem. On December 19, 1938 Hitler would sign a parchment awarding Himmler the SS Service Badge, second class, 'in recognition of twelve years' loyal service.' Without him, Hitler would have no *Leibstandarte*, no prætorian guard. Each man was significantly less without the other.

'H.'s idea of a holiday,' Marga wrote in her diary as their exhausting November 1938 vacation continued, 'is to do something different every day.' She felt constantly tired, and was sleeping badly. 'My feet are unsightly now,' she moaned, if only in those unreceptive pages. 'That's from the work I've had to do. When I was young I probably cursed all the work, but today I am roundly convinced that I've earned my place in the sun, and the happiness and love that go with it. So here's what I say to the youngsters . . . you've got to earn it, nothing's going drop into your lap.' '*When I was young*': she was feeling menopausal, she already saw her life behind her. For Heini,

just thirty-eight but prematurely balding, the best was still to come.

Heini read while Marga, keen to please, studied English. 'Lots going on sometimes, and we did not have time to play bridge.' They went to the movies and theatre, and visited General Walter Schroth, nearly twenty years Heini's senior, and SS-Gruppenführer Richard Hildebrandt, chief of the SS-*Oberabschnitt* Rhine. They phoned Gudrun, but their little girl just burst into tears: 'She can't live without us,' boasted Marga. 'We can be so proud.' She reminded herself of the danger of assassination; she feared for Gudrun's life as well as Heini's.

On December 7 they left Wiesbaden, winding up their vacation, and drove over to Würzburg; they stopped at Pottenstein around five p.m., where a little cluster of experts was waiting to show them over the famous caves – Professor Wüst of the *Ahnenerbe*, Professor Hans Brand the speleologist, and others – and for three hours the Reichsführer explored the underground tunnels, including the latest caverns which the speleologist had discovered. The Himmlers bedded down at the Hotel Bube in Berneck and drove on the next day to Quedlinburg for Heini to inspect the recent excavation works on the cathedral and castle, and to wallow in royal nostalgia about Heinrich the First. At five-thirty they drove on to Berlin, and their month-long vacation was over. As they arrived back in Dahlem, they found Gudrun at the front door, the picture of childish joy. They were such an ordinary German family, in every other way.

On his desk Himmler found a four-page report from Heydrich on what had been found in Austrian files. The very next day, he was gone again, heading down to Vienna to see Kaltenbrunner, and two days passed before he phoned Marga again. He probably also took up a nasty little matter affecting the local Gauleiter, Odilo Globocnik: the Vienna Gauleiter was accused of currency speculation, setting up a secret bank account for cash extorted from Jews, and embezzling Party funds. Globocnik would be forced out of office on January 30, 1939 and posted to the SS *Verfügungstruppe* – the later Waffen-SS – to 'work his passage' back into favour.

Austrian army officers in Vienna told the British consul that Globocnik would not be missed. They spoke of his 'elimination,' but Globocnik was not finished: not by a long chalk.

Marga's diary had lapsed, but she re-opened it for a brief entry when December 3 came: it would have been her late mother's birthday, she reminded Heini, relentlessly. 'If only she had lived to enjoy all the happiness she was entitled to,' she observed, pushing onto him the guilt of a daughter seeing more comfortable times.

'She's looking down from above,' said Heini. 'She can see it all.'

His father had been dead for two years, but he was still conscious of the old man's paternal glare.

HIS ENEMIES LIKED TO call the SS a godless movement, but from his utterances there were these stray clues that he had not wholly shed the snakeskin of Catholic piety he had acquired as an infant. The oath intoned by every young SS recruit at that midnight ceremony ended with the ancient German invocation: 'So help us God!' Every one of them had been asked: 'Do you believe in a God?' to which the SS creed required the answer, 'Yes, I believe in a Lord God!' Only His identity was left unspecified. On every SS man's index card was space for his confession, *gottgläubig* – believer. Godless they weren't, but it was an unidentified belief that bound these men in black together.

Himmler brought up Gudrun to say grace before each meal, but using the formula taught in schools. She gave her religion in class as *gottgläubig*. Alfred Rosenberg had written an anti-Christian tract, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Hitler told his housekeeper Anni Winter that the book was rubbish. She asked Hitler whether she and her husband ought to leave the church, because he was in the SS, Hitler reassured her: 'Why? I am Catholic myself. I'm in the church.'

Marga Himmler's own religious beliefs were unwavering: she remained a Protestant, and each December brought her and Gudrun the Christian delights of gifts, and lighting the Christmas tree. This year there were more gifts than usual, even for the foster-child Gerhard; his school report card was improving; in March 1939 he would pass the entrance exam to become a cadet at the Napola academy at Spandau. Among the Yuletide gifts which Himmler distributed was one he selected for Adolf Hitler, a book entitled *Death and Immortality in the Weltanschauung of Indo-Germanic Thinkers*, unwrapping which would surely be a high point of Christmas jollity

at the Berghof. The gifts addressed to Heini were more pedestrian. Four winters later would see his agricultural boffins discreetly inquiring his car's vital statistics, because they were making up a gift-set of tyres from the latex of the kok-sagys dandelion – Hitler had once drawn his attention to kok-sagys; they wanted it to be a Yuletide surprise. They were raising an experimental harvest in their research section attached to Auschwitz, a sprawling new camp in Silesia. The inquiry was dated two weeks before the unforgiving tide of History began to turn at Stalingrad, dandelion-tyres or not.

LOOKING BACK OVER 1938, Marga was as usual dissatisfied. An upset stomach packed her off to bed. There had been problems with the Dahlem villa: 'Servant problems have been a catastrophe,' she moaned on the last day of December: 'What I have been through this last year just doesn't bear thinking of.' (Sadly, we do not have the servants' view.) She was running a household of half a dozen, with difficulty; Heini was commanding a quarter of a million SS men, and his police forces and the law courts had restored order to the previously riot-torn streets of Weimar-ruled Germany. Prison camp and labour service, guillotine and gibbet, his preferred instruments of discipline and order, were shrinking the pool of hardened criminals.

There were however disturbing signs that absolute power was beginning to corrupt. More of Himmler's relatives and in-laws were finding niches in government and industry. Was he now locking away the merely awkward and the inconvenient? Beside the chronic alcoholics and enemies of state, and hotheads like Pastor Niemöller, there were already some unexpected misfits in his camps.

In 1939 the word went round prisoners in Buchenwald that Himmler's chauffeur had joined them. Hans (his name is of no importance, but it was apparently not Hans Bastians) told them he was twenty-eight and had an attractive wife and two children 'outside.' The Reichsführer had taken to visiting them and his wife, he said, and to sending Hans off on some errand or other. He told his fellow-prisoners that he suspected they were having an affair. 'Toward the end of 1942,' related one of them in February 1945, 'he was sent for and shown a note from Himmler . . . he could be released

providing he signed an undertaking not to return to Munich.' Hans's pals in Buchenwald, named as Michel and Philipp Graudenz, advised him to sign, or the camp's political department would get rid of him. 'Go and find yourself another wife!' He took their advice.

There is no evidence supporting the man's unlikely story, but that he was recklessly spreading it might explain why he landed in Buchenwald. Himmler himself was scrupulously honest, in small things anyway: The big-shots go free, is the German saying; it's the small fry who end up swinging. Thus, starting in January 1939 he ordered every cigar he smoked in his private mess to be put on his tab and paid for. More than once a cop stopped him for speeding – he was criminally reckless at the wheel – and realised too late who he was. But Himmler was already jovially extracting payment from his wallet: 'What are you waiting for?' Every offender had to be fined, he said, 'even if it's God himself' – whom he still saw as a superior, at least to the officer. As for women, like any normal thirty-eight year old he surely hankered after a real physical relationship. But other men's wives were off-limits, at least in his particular moral hemisphere.

HE WAS STILL A GOOD father, if not the most attentive husband. He opened the New Year, 1939, building a snowman with Gudrun down at Gmund, interrupted by the occasional visitor like the Schirachs, or Kranefuss who ran the Friends of Himmler. A dutiful son too – in January 1939 he flew to Munich just for his mother's birthday, then back to Berlin.

He already had ten years to look back on as Reichsführer SS. Back in July, Heissmeyer had reminded Karl Wolff of the anniversary falling on January 6, and they had asked the top half-dozen *Gruppenführer* to come up with ideas. They came (dress: 'long trousers, white shirt') to the Villa Lindenfycht, at three-thirty p.m. on the fifth and gave him a presentation album, bound in black and embellished in silver. In 168 pages of memoirs and photos the album charted the expansion of the SS from 1929, with fawning contributions from the heads of all five SS Main Offices – Heydrich, Wolff, Daluege, Heissmeyer, and Günther Panke, and the chiefs of all fourteen SS regions, the *Oberabschnitte*. Hildebrandt's contribution was executed of course

in calligraphic hand. Among the mementoes was a green handbill put out in Ellmendingen in 1927 announcing a talk by 'Mr Himmler, BSc. (Agric.)' Few of those who signed this album would survive the next six years, because Mr Himmler's was the kiss of death.

'Reichsführer!' the album proclaimed on its title page. 'On January 6, 1929 . . . there were in Germany small, scattered *Schutz-Staffel* squads totalling just 250 men. Today you have at your command a fighting force of 250,000 men ready for any operation, sworn to the Führer body and soul.' Beneath a flattering portrait of Himmler there marched across the parchment his heroic words: 'If Fate should snatch the banner from one man's hand, then step forward the next comrade and pluck up the flag to carry it forth.'

On the sixth itself, the official anniversary, he drove over with Marga to shake hands with Hitler at the Berghof, while that morning's official press oozed with unctuous eulogies – effusions as customary in the authoritarian state as in the democratic, though the latter usually decently holds back until it is time for obituaries. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* marvelled that he had achieved so much while not yet forty. Writing from the British embassy, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes drew London's attention to the power that he already wielded. Despite being by no means popular, Herr Himmler might well rise to 'the highest position,' the Englishman predicted.

Popular or not, Himmler was back in Berlin in time for Hitler's formal New Year reception at midday on January 12, 1939, staged in the New Chancellery. Here the unexpected happened, so subtle he probably missed it. The ambassadors waited in braided finery to exchange felicitations. Hitler *paused* deliberately when he reached the Soviet ambassador, Alexei Merekalov, and began a conversation. He wanted Stalin to know that he could let bygones be bygones. He was working on a Plan B, to pursue if Poland refused to play ball.

THE NEW CHANCELLERY building was the work of an even younger entry to Hitler's immediate circle, the architect Albert Speer.

Speer was handsome and intelligent. Five years junior even to Himmler, scion of a patrician Mannheim family, he had fallen under Hitler's thrall after hearing him speak to five thousand Berlin students

in 1930; he had joined the Party soon after and *half*-joined the SA and SS in 1931. Hitler had appointed him Berlin's *Generalbauinspekteur,* or city-planner, on January 30, 1937. Albert Speer's brother Hermann recalled him mentioning in 1938 that he had suggested installing a brickworks in the new concentration camp in Oranienburg: 'After all,' Albert had said with disgraceful disrespect, 'the Jews already made bricks under the Pharaohs.' As for Dr Goebbels's November 1938 pogrom, Speer found himself stepping over broken glass.

In a letter to his daughter much later he would admit to having 'the slight discomfort all of us sometimes feel' in the presence of the Jews. He was careful not to fall out with Himmler. Speaking of him later, Speer echoed Göring's private 1935 assessment: 'He was mad of course, in a way, but very, very effective.' Himmler, he said, had the patience to listen, the ability to reflect, and a talent for selecting the right men. Speer chose to indulge Himmler's more whimsical side, the interest in the occult, the obsession with race, the search for ancient civilisations and the anthropological expeditions to Tibet and Japan. Speaking to large audiences, said Speer, Himmler did not rant but used a scholarly lecture-theatre tone that had his listeners nodding in agreement. Himmler, he insisted with a hint of feline triumph, had no *social* contact with Hitler. He was an outsider – in fact he was outside all other outsiders.

One detail, between the pogrom and the end of 1939, underlined Speer's lofty assessment that Himmler was an 'outsider': Himmler was not present at Hitler's secret 'programme' speeches of this period, to selected audiences, for example on November 10, and then in 1939 on January 18 and 25, February 10, March 11, and May 23. He did not need to be. In 1939 his diary showed some seventy visits to the Führer (compared with seventeen to Ribbentrop and only four to Göring). Hitler was briefing him separately on his strategic plans, and unlike the generals Himmler found little amiss with them. On January 12, the Reichsführer promised Hitler the loyalty and obedience of himself and his *Gruppenführer*, in the future as in the past, whatever fate might have in store for them: 'We will have to execute many a hard deed: I ask you to believe that we will always do so, but that in our hearts we will always be decent and good human beings.'

IN JANUARY 1939 MARGA had taken to bed again, this time with flu; she ran a temperature, and Heini took her to the Hohenlychen clinic on January 29 and asked Professor Gebhardt to do something about her, curing her bad feet too while the flu subsided. On February 23 he talked with Hitler into expanding Hohenlychen, and told Gebhardt in a letter – which he dictated to Hedwig Potthast. On March 14 he dictated to Hedwig another amiable letter, thanking Gebhardt: 'The stay at Hohenlychen has done my wife a power of good.'

Marga would linger in the clinic for many weeks. Many of the Party leadership maintained on the side liaisons with younger mistresses. Himmler told Hedwig that he felt that divorce was out of the question – Marga had been poorly ever since Gudrun's birth.

HE HAD A DATE WITH Hitler at midday on January 21: the topic of Prague's Jews may have come up, because later that day Hitler brought it up with the Czech foreign minister František Chvalkovský.

Hitler, Göring, and Himmler all agreed that emigration was the solution, but only so long as Europe was at peace. Göring had boomed at that conference on November 12: 'If at any time in the foreseeable future the German Reich finds itself entering foreign political conflicts, then it is self-evident that we in Germany will apply ourselves to effecting a grand totting-up regarding the Jews.' That was vague, but vague was increasingly in vogue, to be followed a year or two later by its more sinister half-brother, euphemism.

Speaking in the Reichstag at the end of January 1939, a triumphant *tour d'horizon* filling two broadsheet pages of next day's *Völkischer Beobachter*, Hitler uttered a short but opaque prophecy. How the Jews had scorned his earlier prophecies, he mocked. 'Today I'm going to be a prophet once more: if international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe succeed once more in plunging the nations into a world war, the outcome will be, not the Bolshevisation of the world and with it the victory of Jewry, but the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe!'

Delphic utterances have been designed since ancient times so that each man can read into them what he wants. Himmler was in the building but evidently missed the 'prophetic warning.' Marga wrote

in her diary about hearing the Führer's 'grand speech' while at the Hohenlychen clinic, but she did not remark on the warning to Judea either. To Hitler it was rhetoric, a crowd-pleasing flourish, addressed less to the Jews of Europe than to Judea abroad – to 'Wall Street.'

Some of his henchmen read the oracle differently. Dr Goebbels selected those three lines for the newsreels, and the *Völkischer Beobachter* headline even ominously picked up the word PROPHETIC.

AFTER IT WAS ALL OVER, conformist historians would seize thankfully upon the manna which the words offered, to construct an *intent* from a prophecy. But in remarks to diplomats Hitler continued to advocate bloodless solutions for the Jewish problem, including the Madagascar Plan, and did so until July 1942; so he was hardly announcing horrors to which History would later bear witness. As recently as January 5, talking with Colonel Józef Beck, the Polish foreign minister, he wistfully remarked that if the Western Powers had restored to Germany her colonial territories he might have made one available to settle not only the German Jews but the Polish Jews.

There is no support for the now-fashionable allegation of genocide. Emigration and re-settlement do not make a race disappear. But once the warm tide of military victory was swirling around him, Hitler often harked back to his January 1939 'prophecy,' as though to say: I warned them what would come, shed no crocodile tears here.

THE TRUTH IS THAT Adolf Hitler opposed every overtly anti-Jewish initiative. Dr Eduard Bloch, a Jewish doctor in Linz, had diagnosed Hitler's mother's terminal illness in 1907. Hitler issued letters protecting Bloch from Gestapo harassment. On November 10, 1938, 'Kristallnacht,' all Jews had been ordered to leave Linz within sixty-two hours, if they had not declared an intention to emigrate. Bloch discovered that an 'exception' was to be made in his case. The Gestapo told him to *remove* the Jewish identification from his home – 'We wouldn't dare touch that matter,' he was told. 'It will be handled by Berlin.' As he finally emigrated to America, Bloch wrote to Hitler: "Before passing the border I want to express my thanks for the protection which I have received. Yours faithfully, Eduard Bloch.'

Hitler had lectured Dr Goebbels as early as September 1935 that 'above all' there was to be no persecution of 'non-Aryans.' When Jews murdered his men Wilhelm Gustloff and then Ernst vom Rath, he had forbidden reprisals. In September 1937 after mixed-race couples were found to be circumventing the Nuremberg prohibition by marrying abroad or by living as 'landlord and tenant,' the Party suggested that they be obliged to spend their honeymoons in concentration camps – apart. Heydrich chewed it over; but on February 13, 1939, two weeks after Hitler's speech, Bormann's staff pointed out that making mixed-race relations a felony would require redrafting the Nuremberg Laws, 'which the Führer has so far flatly refused.' We shall find many more examples in later years.

A few days later after the November 1938 pogrom Heydrich investigated the possibility of requiring Jews to wear a badge identifying them 'as enemies of the state,' as in fact they were. Five designs were submitted including an enamel badge bearing the word *Jude* and a Star of David. Again it was Hitler who torpedoed the scheme. At a Gauleiter conference on December 6, Göring reported: 'Citing fundamental issues, on Sunday the Führer has again ruled out making the Jews wear some kind of badge. He predicts that such a badge would just invite a repetition of the outrages, and these would get worse and worse in certain of your Gaue' – hinting at the Berlin of Dr Goebbels. It would take Goebbels nearly three more years to overcome Hitler's opposition to the introduction of a badge, the notorious Yellow Star.

Even then Hitler opposed the persecution. Furthermore, said Göring that December, Hitler had ruled that Jewish pension entitlements were inviolate. At the very height of Himmler's 'cleansing' operations, in July 1942, Göring would express anger that, although the Führer had categorically forbidden it, Jewish scientists were still being taken off vital research:

> I've just briefed the Führer about this. We have exploited one Jew in Vienna for two years, and another in the field of photography, because they've got things we need of the utmost value to us at this time. It would be madness to say, 'He'll have to go! Of course

he's a great researcher, a fantastic brain, but he's got a Jewish wife and can't be at the university, and so on.'

The Führer has made similar exceptions all the way down to operetta level.

Deeds trump words. They help to put Hitler's 1939 Reichstag speech in its proper light. True genocide allows of no 'exceptions.'

EICHMANN CONTINUED TO FACE difficulties in 1939, managing Jewish emigration from Vienna. The army and air force both soon laid claim to his baroque headquarters, the Rothschild Palace; they wanted it as an officers' mess, but he saw them off. With Globocnik gone, he had solved the financial problem brilliantly. The files suggest that despite handling millions in cash, that side of his work was running with discipline and transparency.

There was a problem. Each layer of remaining Jews was progressively poorer than those who had successfully emigrated. By May, Eichmann's collaborator Löwenherz had raised enough money from abroad to finance more transports; under the code name 'China transports' they chartered more Hapag-Lloyd freighters to carry Jews illegally to Palestine. Eichmann's Vienna office had amassed several million marks from the departure forfeits (the billion-mark levy), much of it in cash, and 1.3 million more from Jews found to have been over-modest in their self-assessments. Eichmann set up two more retraining schools (and even issued certificates crediting the Jewish trainees with more skills than they had). But there were still thirty thousand Jews in Vienna, awaiting processing.

On January 24, 1939 Göring ordered a Central Reich Office of Jewish Emigration set up in Berlin. Heydrich turned it over to Heinrich Müller, and Müller to Eichmann. Again the key was securing the collaboration of the Jews. On February 5 Müller set up a Reich Association of Jews (*Reichsvereinigung der Juden*), amalgamating the existing bodies, except for minority organisations and the Palestine Agency; these latter, Müller ordered, should be afforded special treatment, '*eine Sonderbehandlung*.' The *Reichsvereinigung* would have the task of collecting 'contributions' from wealthier Jews to help

poorer ones to emigrate. 'Special treatment' later became another euphemism, and had a less harmless meaning.

There would still be a sizeable residue of Jews, particularly if war broke out. On the last day of February 1939, the Reich police and security authorities including *Gruppenführer* Eicke, running the KZ system, conferred on how best to use the 600,000 Jews in the event of war. Subject to age and fitness, they would be put to work in road gangs and quarries, 'in labour columns kept apart from those of German blood.' It made pragmatic sense: 'Given the major scale of the Führer's highway construction programme,' said *Ministerialrat* Dr Bernhard Lösener of the ministry of the interior, who had co-authored the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, 'and the special demands placed on the entire highway network in time of war, the employment of all able-bodied Jews on this kind of works is conceivable.'

SINCE HEINRICH HIMMLER WAS directly involved in none of these deliberations, it might be argued that little of this has any place in his biography. Everything has its place, however, as we later find his creation, the SS, becoming ensnared in the largest and most dubious episodes of all time. Two days after Hitler delivered his 'prophetic warning' to Judea, Himmler was taken down with flu. Gudrun caught it too. Marga was less concerned than annoyed. 'I always thought they could not manage without me,' she wrote, propping up the diary in her own sickbed at Hohenlychen; 'but,' she added, 'they are doing very well.' Later she revisited that thought. 'Of course they manage without me, but the question is, how well?'

Heini phoned her twice on February 2, but bravely played down his own illness, since she rattled on about how ill she was – her stomach was still playing up, the nurses had prescribed lots of exercise and a foot-massage twice a day. Marga was quietly enjoying her hospital stay. 'This place is good for me,' she confided in her diary. She was pampered more here than at the Himmler villa. She had never read so much. Other than Frau von Ribbentrop, whose own medical ordeal, a lobotomy, was about to start, nobody was phoning. 'Okay by me,' she decided. In Marga's absence, Heini felt a bit helpless. The local physician, Dr Brustmann, ordered bed-rest for him, but on

February 5 his patient got up and drove bleary-eyed to Hohenlychen with daughter Gudrun, a picture of misery. 'H. hadn't told me how ill he had been, so as not to worry me.' Himmler began casting about for less orthodox physicians, better able to heal him. His diary shows him consulting a nature healer, Dr Franz Setzkorn.

Marga finally returned home on the tenth, and Gudrun wrote her: 'Dear Mummy. Did you talk to the gardener? . . . Can I stay up tomorrow for supper? How is Frau von Ribbentrop? Aunt Lydia is sewing everything for me.' She signed it, 'Your Püppi.'

Her mother found herself tiring more easily; the years were telling, and perhaps she wondered if she was getting too old for Heini.

Heini sensed the growing distance between them, and he now had a younger woman in prospect to minister to his needs; we shall meet her shortly. The young lady was still unmarried – of course – but impressionable, and that was good: he intended to impress upon her that there was an important patriotic duty for her to fulfil.

THE WHEELS IN THE REICH'S war engine were moving again, if not yet whirring. Himmler was constantly on the road, visiting SS and police units, driving from the Rhineland to Silesia. Thousands of SS men doing their six months' labour service were working side by side with Fritz Todt's organisation, constructing fortifications along the frontier with France. Hitler had laid his plans to eliminate Prague. President Emil Hácha, a lawyer, had succeeded Edvard Beneš, who had fled to the United States. Beneš had left Czecho-Slovakia divided into three parts – ripe for conquest, as any Latin scholar knows: Bohemia-Moravia, the Carpatho-Ukraine, and Slovakia.

On the evening of February 13, Hitler visited the shrine of Otto von Bismarck in Friedrichsruh. Hitler now revealed to Ribbentrop's state-secretary von Weizsäcker his decision to strike on March 15. He must also have told Ribbentrop and Himmler. 'For those who know that the rest of Czecho-Slovakia will be dealt its death-blow in about four weeks' time,' wrote Weizsäcker in a matter-of-fact way afterwards, 'it was interesting to hear the Führer declare that he himself used to prefer surprise-tactics, but that he has now gone off them, as he has exhausted their possibilities.'

The next morning, February 14, Himmler joined Hitler at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg for the launching of a new battleship. The hull – thousands of tons of steel and armourplate, decks lined with sailors and dockworkers – slow-tobogganed down the slipway into the Elbe, majestically kicking aside the supporting timbers. On her bow, a board clapped open to reveal her newly painted name, *Bismarck*. As bands played the Horst-Wessel Anthem, the newsreel cameras lingered on Hitler. The Himmler diary shows that he spent that evening back in Berlin with this man, his lord and master, getting instructions. Late on February 17, he flew to Poland, following similar visits by Göring, to whom Hitler had granted authority in dealings with Poland. Himmler was formally taking up an invitation from the chief of Polish security police, General Kordian Józef Zamorski. 'I am happy for him,' wrote Marga without conviction, 'bitter though it is for me always to find myself alone.'

HITLER HAD GIVEN HIM guidelines for the Warsaw talks which betrayed an interest in the Ukraine as well as addressing the Danzig and Jewish problems. Senior government ministers came to the German embassy together with the dapper, goatee-bearded Zamorski; he had a reputation for dealing with opponents which Himmler could only admire. The Poles wanted to confront him about reports that he was financing the training of Ukrainian irregulars, and to complain about German broadcasts in Polish.

They were planning to downgrade their large Jewish population to second-class citizens, who could be turfed out. As for Danzig, while they recognised that the free port was in the German fold, they refused to discuss *Anschluss*, despite Himmler's veiled threat to stir the Ukrainian cauldron. He hinted that 'it would be easy to resolve the Carpatho-Ukrainian problem as part of a general settlement of the other questions still open between Germany and Poland.'

Leaving the ministers to mull over this, he set off with Zamorski for a three-day shoot in the Białowieża Forest southeast of Białystok, a remnant of the primeval forest that once carpeted the whole European Plain. It is unlikely that Marga's troublesome feet would have made her a welcome addition to this Party.

Empty-handed as far as this foray into diplomacy was concerned, Himmler returned to Germany in time for the Party's February 25 foundation junket and Göring's reception at the House of Aviators in Berlin. He took Marga along to both functions, but she had no head for politics. 'The Party's invitation was in Munich,' she recorded. 'Very interesting. If I could just write it all down.' She didn't. On March 1, Heini attended Hitler's banquet for the diplomatic corps.

AGAIN HIMMLER WAS PLAYING a crucial role. He had already begun infiltrating SD agents into Slovakia, with orders to stir unrest. Heydrich gave the execution of the plot to Franz Walter Stahlecker and Heinz Maria Karl Jost, at Prinz-Albrechtstrasse.

We have met Jost briefly, flying into Vienna with Himmler in March 1938. He was now running SD counter-espionage and foreign Intelligence. A slightly-built, scar-faced *Standartenführer,* he had trained as a lawyer like so many of Himmler's men; knowledge of the law would not stop him later commanding an *Einsatzgruppe* on the eastern front – but it would help him to evade the nastier consequences. He had joined the Party in 1928. He was still job-hunting in Berlin in June 1934 when Werner Best invited him to join the SD. Best, recalled Jost, had a slogan for his new SD, 'Let all decent elements in the country rally to this organisation!' – a wholesome intention soon corrupted by others.

Jost was scornful of Canaris's *Abwehr*: it lavished money on its agents, for example White Russian émigrés, and received little in return. In 1936, Jost began building up a network of overseas agents, based on big industrial concerns like the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG), which already maintained agents in Oslo, The Hague, and elsewhere. That was the MI6 model too. In 1938 Jost had set up in Dresden the first *Einsatzgruppe*, then just a simple Intelligence task-force, ready to move into Czecho-Slovakia.

HITLER'S CLOCK WAS ALREADY whirring. On March 9, 1939 he invited the Himmlers to a reception at the New Chancellery. Speer had rebuilt Hitler's New Chancellery in just twelve months. Himmler liked what he saw; so did Marga. 'What harmony of colour!' she

enthused. 'So many dark and intense hues. Wood and marble on one wall, beautiful pictures and tapestries. It's not quite ready yet.'

The timetable was the familiar one: Slovakia to proclaim her independence, and appeal to Germany to guarantee her frontiers; Germans in Bohemia to appeal for protection, followed by a Berlin ultimatum to Prague. Himmler probably took the opportunity of an invitation to the Hungarian embassy on March 10 to remind them of their role – they were to enter the Carpatho-Ukraine region to 'restore order.' Marga of course knew none of this, and noted only that she had fifteen ladies round for tea afterwards.

As the date approached, Jost contributed his two best *Sturmbann–führer* in Vienna to the SD programme of subversion. They were Werner Göttsch and Alfred Naujocks, the cut-throats who had messily silenced the Black Front broadcaster Rudolf Orbis in 1935. Göttsch was twenty-six; he and Naujocks established secret contacts with Dr Ferdinand Ďurčanský, a Slovak nationalist, and the Slovak prime minister Father Jozef Tiso, his state secretary Franz Karmasin, Vojtech Tuka, chairman of a newly founded German-Slovak Association, and other pro-German separatists.

Prague moved first, against the Slovak separatists. On March 10, they arrested Tuka and replaced Tiso as prime minister. 'The attempt to stir things up with our SS has only partly succeeded,' recorded Goebbels in his diary. 'Looks as if Slovakia's not playing along.' Undismayed, the High Command issued Hitler's orders, to invade Prague at six a.m. on the fifteenth. Tiso declared Slovakia's independence, and Göttsch duly forwarded to Hitler a letter from Tiso dated March 13, requesting Reich protection. Keppler flew Tiso to Berlin in person where Hitler confirmed that Slovakia's 'historic hour' was dawning.

Normally Himmler would have gone over to the Reich Chancellery where everything was happening, but once again he was indisposed and felt worse than ever. After lunching with Hitler on the eleventh he had a constant and painful feeling of mucus at the back of his nose. Marga dismissed it as 'a touch of flu' but Himmler learned from another source, perhaps the masseur of whom we shall shortly hear, that it was catarrh. It was awkward not least for its spelling:

writing up his diary, the Reichsführer had several shots at putting the 'h' in the right place and settled for *Katahrr* on the twelfth; the *h* still looked wrong, and he crossed it out, hoping this illness with the tricky spelling would go away.

THE IDES OF MARCH, the fourteenth, had come. As dusk fell the SS *Leibstandarte*, issued with field-grey uniforms, infiltrated the Moravian Ostrau strip to prevent the Poles from laying hands on the modern steel mill at Witkowitz (Vitkovice).

The *Forschungsamt* intercepts showed that Britain was disinterested. Neville Chamberlain was heard telling Henderson he had 'no desire to interfere unnecessarily in matters with which other governments may be more directly involved,' meaning Hungary and Poland. Colonel Eduard Wagner wrote privately to his wife: 'I don't think much will happen, and the foreign powers have expressed disinterest. End of Czechoslovakia! – And have they been asking for it!'

HITLER SENT TO THE CZECH president Emil Hácha an invitation to come to Berlin with his foreign minister František Chvalkovský that evening. At midday General Keitel came to report that the Panzer divisions and bomber squadrons were all in position.

President Hácha's train was not due until ten p.m. Keitel found Hitler and his guests retiring to the Music Room to watch a movie, 'A Hopeless Case' (*Ein hoffnungsloser Fall*). Toward eleven p.m. Ribbentrop announced that Hácha's train had pulled into the Anhalt station. Hitler told him to let the old gentleman rest until midnight. This exaggerated insouciance disturbed Keitel. 'Within eight or ten hours,' he later wrote, 'the first shots would be being exchanged.'

At the station, the high Czech delegation was being received in rain and sleet with the honours due to their rank, with drumrolls and an SS honour guard. Hácha's daughter was accompanying him as his nurse. Hitler ordered an adjutant to place a bouquet of yellow roses in her room at the Adlon with a note in his handwriting. It was some time after midnight when the Czech Party arrived at Hitler's Chancellery. Hácha murmured about how honoured he was to meet Hitler, the most powerful statesman of modern times.

Hitler took them to his study and sprawled, his hair tousled, in an easy chair. He motioned his guests to a sofa, while the remaining participants, including Ribbentrop, Göring, and Keitel faced them in a semi circle. (Himmler was still indisposed.) President Hácha began an introduction which was lengthy – he was an administrative-court judge, he began, who had accepted as a patriotic duty the mantle of leadership thrust upon him after Beneš's flight into exile.

He did not get far. 'The more Hácha twittered on,' Hitler recalled in May 1942, 'about how hard-working and conscientious the Czechs were, the more I felt I was sitting on red-hot coals, knowing the invasion order had already been issued.' He asked Keitel and the others to withdraw, and invited Hácha to sign the document already lying on the table, trusting his country to Germany's protection. He had no intention of robbing Czechs of their national character, he said – *keine Entnationalisierung* was the phrase Hácha noted.

His army would cross the frontier at six a.m. 'My decisions are irreversible. *Meine Entschlüsse sind unabänderlich.*'

Shortly Keitel entered with a note that Witkowitz was in the hands of the *Leibstandarte*. Hitler nodded silently. Keitel later reminisced: 'Some time later Göring and I were called back in again.' The gentlemen were standing round the table and Hitler was telling Hácha that Keitel would confirm that his troops would be crossing the frontier at six o'clock. 'Hácha begged for a respite, as he had to telephone his government in Prague.' Göring intervened to announce that his bombers would be appearing over Prague at dawn. Anybody who tried to resist would be 'trodden underfoot' – *zertreten*. 'I have a grave function,' said Göring. 'I would be truly sorry if I had to destroy your beautiful city. But do it I shall, if only to show the British and the French what my Luftwaffe is capable of.'

Hácha quibbled that he could hardly stop his forces from defending their borders. While the Czechs were telephoning 'don't shoot' orders from the ante-room, there was an unplanned occurrence. Dr Theo Morell (Hitler's personal physician), asked to take the president's pulse, and administered an injection. Whatever was in the syringe, it worked – Hácha asked for a regular supply. The Czechs finally signed on the dotted line at four-thirty a.m., and retired to the Adlon.

Wilhelm Keppler shortly sent the absent Himmler a written report: Hitler, reviewing this triumph, had paid particular homage to the secret agents inside Czecho-Slovakia who had risked their lives. 'Whereupon Ribbentrop declared that the whole job had been magnificently performed by the SS alone, and particularly by Dr Veesenmayer und Göttsch.' To his two private secretaries, Christa Schroeder and Gerda Daranowski, emerging from their cubby-hole behind the panels, Hitler exclaimed: 'This is the most wonderful day of my life. I have now accomplished what others strove in vain for centuries to achieve. Bohemia and Moravia are back in the Reich. I will go down as the greatest German of all time.'

CATARRH OR NOT, Himmler was not going to miss this invasion. Grimacing with pain, a few minutes after eight a.m. on the fifteenth he was saluting Hitler at the Anhalt station, and boarding the Führer's special train with Karl Wolff. At 8:09 a.m. (by his diary) the train hauled out, heading to the Czech frontier. Hácha and his Party were still fast asleep in their rooms at the Adlon. German Army units swiftly flooded into Czech territory. The panzer division commanded by General Geyr von Schweppenburg raced on ahead to Prague; it reached the city in a snowstorm around nine a.m. SS units followed.

Once again Heini had told Marga only the barest details. She jotted disjointed notes: 'Heini has gone to join the Führer's special train to be present with him when they make the grand entrance into Prague. Grandiose times, and people can be so petty,' she added gloomily. 'Snowing outside. Püppi has a map of Germany on which she is following everything to do with her daddy. Still not faring too well at school. . . Prague has been taken without a fight. Nations are so dumb and keep picking fights. How fortunate we are,' she decided, 'to have a Führer who is a real brain.'

Hitler's train arrived at Böhmisch-Leipa station near the Czech frontier, a few minutes after two p.m. Stamping their feet in the worsening blizzard, Colonel Erwin Rommel, commandant of the Führer's Headquarters, and the panzer corps commander General Erich Hoepner were waiting. Should Hitler risk going on to the enemy capital, Prague, itself? In a private letter that day Colonel

Wagner also expressed 'uneasiness.' Responsible for Hitler's safety, Himmler also thought the risk too great. General Hoepner argued that Hitler should drive straight on into Prague by road to show who was boss; he would vouch for the Führer's safety. Rommel agreed; he had no choice. 'He put himself in my hands,' he told a friend, 'and he never forgot.'

Hitler announced: 'I'm going in!' At four p.m. Rommel gave the signal for their convoy of vehicles to cross into the 'enemy' territory. The blizzard grew heavier. The broad highway into Prague was choked with army trucks; one vehicle in their convoy slithered and rolled over. Ignoring the biting wind, Hitler stood up in his open car, saluting his regiments as they passed. In gathering darkness they entered Hácha's official residence, the Hradčany Castle, through a gate in the rear. The British embassy reported that Himmler and Hitler entered Prague at seven-fifteen p.m. along with Keitel, Ribbentrop, Lammers and Lieutenant-General Carl-Heinrich Stülpnagel, deputy chief of the General Staff (of whom we hear more later).

Wehrmacht troops milled around the snow-covered courtyard in the darkness, looking for doors and entrances. The castle flunkies had not expected them. Hitler's adjutants would have to sleep on the floor. 'All's well that ends well,' wrote Rommel. 'Our bigger neighbours are putting a very sour face on things.'

That was a reference to Poland and France. They had lost an ally.

IT WAS ONE OF HITLER'S LAST bloodless victories, a brilliant achievement of diplomacy and subversion. It inspired fear and then anger in his enemies, and a renewed admiration from his disciples. Himmler's chief adjutant since mid-November 1938, the tall, blue-blooded SS *Oberführer* Ludolf von Alvensleben – nicknamed 'Bubi,' he towered head and shoulders above the Reichsführer – described the scene in a letter to little Gudrun soon after: 'Toward evening, after a very blustery and ice-cold drive over from Böhmisch-Leipa which took us past many columns of marching soldiers, the Führer made his entrance to the old Imperial Castle in Prague, the Hradčany Castle, where he and his staff took up residence.'

Hitler's lawyer, Hans Frank, confessed that he was near to tears

at the sheer lawlessness of the move. Hitler began dictating a law establishing a 'protectorate' over this new territory. Wilhelm Keppler wrote to Himmler. 'We were joined by the Führer, and the Führer paid credit to the men who had done the most dangerous front-line work at risk to their own lives. To which Ribbentrop replied that this entire job had been completed by the SS alone, in exemplary fashion.'

A soldier was sent up onto the roof to hoist Hitler's personal standard. Hitler turned to Himmler, so 'Bubi' related, and flung his arms round him out of sheer delight that it had been granted to him to restore to Germany her provinces of Bohemia and Moravia after all these centuries. 'Himmler,' he exclaimed, 'isn't it wonderful to be here – but here we now are. And we shall never leave again.' After a while he added, 'I don't like to blow my own trumpet, but here I've got to say that how I did it was really rather *elegant*.'

General von Schweppenburg was annoyed not to have been invited into the castle, but he grudgingly credited Hitler for showing personal courage: Prague, he said, was no place for the German head of state to show himself that day. As for Göring, his propaganda fly-past over Prague had to be abandoned, as his squadrons were grounded by fog. At two in the morning the German Centre in Prague sent up a cold buffet: ham, bread rolls, butter, cheese, fruit, and Pilsner beer. It was the only time Hitler was ever seen with a glass of beer in his hand.

THINGS WOULD NOT BE *elegant* forever. Toward the end of the coming war, 'Bubi' Alvensleben, by now Heinrich Himmler's police 'viceroy' in Saxony, was watching Dresden, his beautiful Dresden, ravaged by seven hundred heavy bombers, while more than one hundred thousand of its citizens were burned alive in the space of a few hours: the British codebreakers heard Alvensleben reporting hysterically on the inferno that night, and Himmler telling him to pull himself together: Things always look worse at first sight, he said, than they really are.

38: *The Masseur*

A TWO WEEK BOUT OF CATARRH HAD TRIGGERED in Himmler a series of annoying illnesses; it was an annoying word to spell. He was little more than a spectator as his Gestapo and SD specialists flooded into Prague. The press office of the legation had prepared lists of Jewish and other hostile journalists. The wiser ones were already leaving.

As for the guileless President Hácha, he had slept late in Berlin's Hotel Adlon. His train journey back to Prague next day took three hours longer than expected, 'apparently because of snowdrifts.' Arriving at Hradčany castle, he learned that the overlords from Germany were already in residence. Here, Hitler told him he was going to appoint a Reich Protector, a conservative statesman known for his objectivity (two days later he named him, the former foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath); Hitler predicted that the economy would experience an undreamed-of boom, an *Aufschwung* – as in fact it did. Since Czech industry armed most of the Balkans, the seizure of Prague had benefits far beyond Czech frontiers.

He treated Hácha as a gentleman, and gave him pride of place at his forthcoming birthday parade. In private, Hitler was contemptuous. 'At present,' he would say three years later, 'I receive from Hácha messages of sympathy. I don't publish them so as not to create the impression that we need the support of an underdog.'

The rest of March 16, 1939 was taken up with official ceremonies. The military were not invited. Himmler joined Hitler for his entry into Brno, renamed Brünn – they paused at City Hall with its candlelit conference chamber. Ethnic Germans poured into the market square to glimpse Hitler and roared approval. He proceeded across the country, and into Vienna; they checked into Hotel Imperial like the year before. Neurath was waiting in the foyer, summoned as 'Protector of Bohemia and Moravia.' He found it rather unedifying.

On March 18, Himmler briefly left Hitler's side in Linz to inspect a new project, 'Mauthausen KZ.' Here Oswald Pohl was establishing a big *Konzentrationslager*; he had leased the Wienergraben quarry to hold a thousand prisoners. The inmates were hardened criminals, but the KZ would widen its embrace to political prisoners. Pohl planned to develop Mauthausen into a commercial enterprise using Category III prisoners – classed as repeat offenders – to quarry granite for Hitler's architectural plans. It was the start of an SS pattern.

BY RETRIEVING Bohemia and Moravia, of course, the Germans found themselves burdened once again with Jews. Heydrich appointed Franz Stahlecker as commander of the Security Police, and sent into Prague an SD *Sonderkommando,* a task-force to seize archives and enemies. On April 28, Section II/112 in Berlin provided an arrest-list of Communists and Jews which the SD *Oberabschnitt* South-East had compiled. Again, the SD preference was that the Jews emigrate. Eichmann set up an agency in Prague based on his Vienna *Zentrale*. 'We were able to repeat the feat we had pulled off in Vienna,' he wrote years later, hiding in Argentina, 'because Heydrich got stuck in too.'

When Neurath suggested on May 2 that they introduce the 1935 Nuremberg Laws in the Protectorate, Hitler ruled that the Czechs should regulate things and 'we should not interfere.' Alois Eliáš, prime minister of the new autonomous Protectorate government, submitted a draft decree on the twelfth, suggesting that Jews be obliged to take Czech citizenship. This time it was the SD who disapproved – Stahlecker pointed out that 'in the event of its later confiscation' their property would fall to the Protectorate and not to the Reich. Unresolved, the Jewish problem lumbered slowly on.

UNTIL MARCH 1939 and Prague, Hitler had been half-hoping for a deal with Poland: he would generously accept from Poland the return of Danzig and other concessions, including an autobahn from Germany to East Prussia, a keystone of his strategic planning. In return, he hinted at helping Poland to regain territories in the east. At a secret Berghof meeting on January 5, 1939, he had put these thoughts to the Polish foreign minister Józef Beck. Since Beck did not bite, Hitler decided on the unthinkable instead, to play for the hand of Joseph Stalin. Hitler reviewed old newsreels and Leni Riefenstahl heard him whisper, 'He looks like a person one could do a deal with.' His lengthy chat with the Soviet ambassador at the New Year diplomatic reception was his opening gambit. In February he ordered measures designed to reverse the drain of manpower from East Prussia.

There was one other matter to attend to. In one of those corners of northern Europe, with ill-fitting frontiers like a badly-tiled floor, was an old Baltic port-city, formerly under German rule; it was known as Memel, until the Treaty of Versailles amputated it from East Prussia; Lithuania took the port and renamed it Klaipėda. Fifteen years had passed since then. On March 20, just five days after Prague, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's underrated foreign minister, buttonholed Juozas Urbšys, Lithuania's foreign minister, as he passed through Berlin, and said bluntly that Germany would like her port back.

Ribbentrop did not say please, because Lithuania had no choice. All these old possessions were dropping like ripe fruits into the German lap. Aside from the Jewish problem, things were moving with lightning speed. Himmler flew in his Junkers 52 to nearby Tilsit, and drove across into Klaipėda to prepare for the Führer's arrival the next day. Hitler made a triumphant entrance aboard the cruiser *Deutschland*, and together with Himmler and Rommel toured the port for an hour and a half; General Milch stood in for Göring, who had swanned off to a Mediterranean vacation in San Remo. Karl Wolff, travelling in Himmler's retinue, sent his wife Frieda a postcard reading, 'Hearty greetings to you and the children from the triumphant entry of the Führer into Memel. Heil Hitler, your Wölfchen.' Himmler added a scribble at its foot, reading, 'and greetings from your humble H. Himmler.'

The postmark still read 'Klaipėda,' but the postage stamp was already overprinted MEMELLAND; like old times. Himmler jotted in his diary: 'Memel. Führer in Memel, σ¯oTilsit; —| Berlin' (his private symbols for 'by car' and 'plane'). Ten thousand Jews who had sought their fortune in this stolen corner of East Prussian landscape now scurried eastwards into the safety of Lithuania. Could they but see into the future, they would not stop running even now.

THIS SEEMED TO LEAVE just two issues: Danzig; and a future autobahn linking Germany to East Prussia. 'When I took possession of Memel,' Hitler later reminisced, 'Chamberlain informed me through a third Party that he understood very well that this step had to be taken, even though he could not approve of it publicly. At this period Chamberlain was being fiercely attacked by the Churchill clique.'

The pedagogue in Himmler liked the neat way that all these matters were being resolved. Would Poland make the necessary concessions?

Soon Hitler could count on a new ally: impressed by these recent triumphs, Stalin had at last responded to his diplomatic overture at the New Year reception. On March 10 he heaped coals on the western democracies; his foreign minister Molotov would draw laughter by remarking on August 31, the eve of war: 'It is now evident that in Germany they interpreted these statements of Comrade Stalin correctly on the whole, and drew practical conclusions.'

Hitler ordered a halt to propaganda against Moscow, and a final approach made to Warsaw. On March 21, Ribbentrop repeated the German offer to Lipski, the Polish ambassador: in return for Danzig and the autobahn, Germany would recognize Poland's 'corridor' to the Baltic, and even her western frontier.

It is unlikely that Hitler was serious about recognizing Poland's frontier, as that was incompatible with the black nugget of his ambitions. The SA and Himmler's SS were already secretly building up their forces on Danzig territory. Hitler explained to General von Brauchitsch on March 25 that he would not tackle Poland yet; that would call for the right conditions. 'I would then knock Poland so flat that politically speaking she wouldn't have to be taken into account for many decades to come.' He hoped to avoid using force over Danzig

as it might drive the Poles into the arms of the British, who were talking of guarantees. 'The possibility of taking Danzig by military action will be examined,' noted a colonel on Brauchitsch's staff, 'only if L[ipski] gives us to understand that the Polish government will be unable to explain any voluntary surrender of Danzig to its own public, but that a *fait accompli* by us would help them to a solution.'

Hitler really did half-expect a secret deal. Two days later Grand Admiral Raeder initialled a brazen plan for Hitler to embark in the cruiser *Deutschland* and appear off Danzig with the fleet: following which, *à la* Memel, he would go ashore in a torpedo-boat and proceed in triumph to the city centre.

IT WAS NOT TO BE, HOWEVER: Poland remained, as Weizsäcker privately put it, high-handed and insolent. She was already indignant over Memel. Far from conceding Germany's two requests, Poland was mobilising and moving troops toward Danzig, as Admiral Canaris and the Abwehr now reported. On March 26 Warsaw warned that if Hitler continued to demand the return of Danzig it would mean war. Hitler was momentarily puzzled by Poland's intransigence, but on the thirty-first, as he arrived back in Berlin from the Berghof, disconcerting news came from London: the British prime minister had assured Warsaw of support 'in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish government accordingly considered it vital to resist.'

Just how Britain could come to Poland's aid was not explained. At very least Britain's guarantee, based on skewed Intelligence as so often in her history, vested the future of her Empire in the aggrieved and uncaring hands of Warsaw politicians.

The effect on Hitler was immediate. At 12:45 p.m. on March 31, 1939 he sent for Keitel and ordered the High Command to draw up a directive for war with Poland code-named CASE WHITE. Hitler's train left Berlin for Wilhelmshaven, at 8:47 p.m. that day.

Everybody, and particularly Himmler, expected that Hitler knew the risks. In April 1939 Ribbentrop's right-hand man Weizsäcker echoed Reichenau's remark, remarking that Hitler was like a poker-player playing for high stakes. 'A creeping crisis,' Weizsäcker

calmly assessed, 'but short of war. Every man will do his duty.'

ON SUNDAY MARCH 26, Himmler rejoined his family circle in Dahlem, but only because he still had that chronic head-cold, as Marga noticed. The villa was in the usual turmoil, as Marga tackled domestic matters that were more vexatious than Danzig, Poland, and the Jews: she and her sister Lydia 'straightened a few things out,' which meant that Marga had sacked two more domestics, provoking a fresh homily in her diary: 'There just isn't any sense of duty nowadays.'

Otherwise she was going to seed. Her father was now confined to bed, as his end approached. She tried to visit him every month, but he might hang on for weeks. She hadn't opened a book since leaving Hohenlychen. Under Dr Goebbels the theatre was going to the dogs, and movies were little better. The rare evenings alone with Heini were no longer a pleasure. He was often away, attending SS-officer conferences in Berlin, Stettin, and Hamburg, and to police affairs in Dresden, Berlin, Königsberg, and Breslau. Occasionally he did invite her to diplomatic functions, and once Hitler came out to their Dahlem villa for an evening, which thrilled Gudrun; but Marga no longer went with Heini on great occasions like warship launchings.

Her enthusiasm for the Party, never strong, was waning. Her clique of top SS wives invited her to a few soirées that spring, and she hosted some tea parties of her own and began nagging Heini to find a job for the husband of one of her blue-blooded women friends – that nice Baroness Erna von Schade. Heini could not get out of it. Although the husband, Hermann von Schade, was SS chief in Königsberg, he was twelve years his senior and a bumbling old fool. It irritated Himmler to see pot-bellied runts with money or pedigree in their favour, strutting around in the fine Hugo Boss black uniform. For normal SS men, that uniform had to be earned. As for Schade, Heini could at best appoint him SS commander in Bavaria, if Baron von Eberstein, whom he disliked, would step aside. Advising Marga to take Gudrun down to Gmund, Heini fled in the opposite direction, to northern Germany. Marga did not conceal her irritation: 'Heini is not here, as usual.'

HIMMLER WAS IN Wilhelmshaven. He joined Hitler on April 1, 1939 for a battleship launch. The warship, the finest battleship in the world, was to be named after the late Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. Ilse von Tirpitz, the late admiral's daughter, did the honours, accompanied by her husband. He was the austere and ultimately ill-fated Ulrich von Hassell, who had been ambassador in Rome until the Blomberg–Fritsch scandal provided cover for his dismissal.

At a banquet aboard *Scharnhorst*, von Hassell chatted with Himmler about a chauffeur and valet the latter had taken over from him (perhaps to replace the one who had found himself in Buchenwald). The new chauffeur, Schuhknecht, had had a minor accident. Himmler held uncompromising views about reckless drivers (other than himself): the man was taken into custody for six weeks, not allowed to contact his wife, then sworn to secrecy and released without charge. Accepted back into the Hassell household, his nerves in tatters, the wretched chauffeur told them horror-stories about life with the Himmlers. 'What Schuhknecht described is less than flattering for Mr and Mrs Himmler,' summarised Hassell, writing in his diary.

Himmler snapped at the banquet that Schuhknecht had tried to tittle-tattle to him about the Hassells, and he had had to shut him up. 'The man's job was to wait on me, and not start ratting out his former master!' The Reichsführer, chortled Hassell, was not quite the Champion of the Common Man he made himself out to be.

From Wilhelmshaven, Himmler flew back to a spring-weather Berlin, talked with his friend Ribbentrop, then flew on down to Gmund where he rejoined his disgruntled spouse on April 3. Marga hated the constant moves. Bavaria was still wrapped in snow and winter darkness. 'So here we are again after all,' she wrote on the fourth, 'and I would so much have liked to stay put for a change. Pulling up the sticks eight times a year. There's still snow on the ground, and in Berlin it is spring. But H. finds it beautiful here.'

To appease this never-satisfied female, Heini put wheels in motion about a job for von Schade. Heini's blocked sinuses needed respite, his afflicted health cried out for repair. He played tennis every day. In the first week of April a powerful new character hove onto the

horizon, figuring in the Himmler diary anonymously on the fourth, sixth, and seventh: 'Masseur.'

THE MASSEUR WAS Felix Kersten, an accomplished raconteur. If we are already a tad scepical about Karl Wolff's value as a witness, Kersten merits an even more jaundiced eye. He had been born two years before Himmler, in another disputed corner of the Baltic states upon which conquerors had planted their different flags and identities over the centuries. At the time of Kersten's birth the city was in Livonia, Imperial Russia, and called Yuryev; it later became Dorpat, and after that Tartu in Estonia. Kersten had fought with a German unit in the Great War, and arrived in Finland with a free corps in 1918, where he fraudulently, as Helsinki later determined, adopted the identity and military record of one Edvard Alexander Kersten. In November 1919 he joined the Finnish army as an instructor and resigned in May 1920, becoming commander of the *Suojeluskunta*, a Protection Guard Regiment of the Northern-Satakunta. He became a Finnish citizen – a convenience he maintained until it became inconvenient in 1945, when he became a Swede instead.

Casually introduced to scientific massage while in Helsinki, Kersten moved to Berlin in 1922 and perfected his own techniques under the Chinese master-masseur Dr B Ko. Among Kersten's several claims was a cure for impotence – it involved working on the glands of a patient's throat. He had never actually qualified, but Finland gave him the courtesy title of *Medizinalrat*. Boastful, teetotal, non-smoking, and speaking German with a thick Berlin dialect, he introduced his magic hands to Prince Heinrich zu Mecklenburg (who became Hendrik, the prince consort of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands), and moved to Holland in 1928. More corpulant, wealthy, and flourishing various medical certificates, he returned to Hitler's Berlin in 1934, and began treating Ribbentrop and other ministers. It was the industrialist Dr August Diehn who introduced him to Himmler.

He won Himmler's trust, and they met ever more frequently as the years sped past; Himmler's notes mention him sixteen times in 1939, fifty-seven in 1940, and 116 in 1941–1942.

In May 1937 Kersten married a German, Irmgard Neuschäffer. His vigorous massage sessions from 1939 brought the Reichsführer some physical relief. Himmler had suffered from a bad stomach (he was 'excused beer' in the Apollo fraternity). While most of the staff ministering to the Reichsführer came to unfortunate ends, Kersten, like Wolff, did not. He was a survivor, partly thanks to a diary published later. Mostly it was not written by him. According to his son Ulf, Kersten spoke to his sister in Berlin and it was she who put pen to paper. The Kersten 'diary' contains discrepancies which are hard to explain; it puts him with Himmler when History knows they were far apart. The 'real' diary which he did occasionally write revealed that the Bonniers, the Stockholm publishing family of Ashkenazi origin, had offered Himmler the addresses of every Jew in Sweden. The offer was spurned; Heydrich had those data already.

How far did Himmler take this new friend into his confidence? Kersten certainly knew more than he owned to: accompanying Himmler on the visit to Finland in July 1942, Kersten disclosed to Risto Ryti, the president, that the Jews were being sent from Germany to Latvia and Poland, 'where they are cold-bloodedly killed en masse,' as the statesman recorded in Finnish in his own diary, 'Horrible!' He added: 'Even Kersten disapproved of this kind of slaughter.' The same diary reveals that Kersten boasted to Ryti that he had been the personal masseur of Queen Wilhelmina.

There are discrepancies. By 1945 a humanitarian aura glowed around Kersten, thanks to other documents. Some of these were also forgeries. Visiting Ryti in October 1943 Kersten purveyed medical fantasies about Mussolini: 'Syphilitic paralysis has progressed. . . He has stomach cancer. He cannot live more than six months.' Kersten claimed that Himmler showed him a medical dossier on Hitler (with revelations about 'syphilitic paralysis'); but it is at variance with the real medical records, which we tracked down in 1980.

HIMMLER HOWEVER LIKED AND TRUSTED KERSTEN. The masseur had his practice on Rüdesheimer Platz, in Berlin's Wilmersdorf district. (The apartment had once belonged to a Jew who had got out in good time.)

With half a dozen jealous doctors already squabbling over him, Hitler would not allow this new man near him. On June 6, 1943 Theo Morell, his personal physician, recorded that Ribbentrop recommended vigorous stomach massages, 'no doubt thinking of his own Kersten whom he's been trying for years to foist onto the Führer.' Kersten massaged Morell once in Zhitomir in 1942 however, and left him hurting all over. 'Both Wolff and Himmler,' Morell added, 'have tried to get me to send Kersten into action on the Führer.'

'I refuse to subject the Führer to these violent abdominal massages,' Morell told Ribbentrop. 'I would only be in favour of gentle massages to stimulate his circulation.' Hitler's adjutant Julius Schaub heard Hitler scoff: 'Why should I let such a Nature's Apostle get his hands on me? If this man is so fantastic, it puzzles me that you lot are so ill.'

In the Third Reich the dilettante was king, and most of Hitler's satraps favoured quacks. Rudolf Hess inclined toward homeopaths, magnetopaths, and astrologers. Himmler distrusted anybody with proper credentials – book-learning, he called it – but as Morell's diary shows, he too never gave up his quest for better health. Ribbentrop and Emmy Göring were using Morell's own patent medicine, a multi-vitamin containing the amphetamine Pervitin. Morell tested it on Hitler, his 'Patient A,' for the first time on March 14, 1944 and watched its effect; he started supplying it to Himmler too. On April 6, 1944 he visited the Berghof: 'Gave Patient A his injections as usual,' and on the seventh, visiting Ribbentrop at his castle, Fuschl, he 'injected intramuscular glucose,' and then 'Himmler as usual.'

A WEEK AHEAD OF EASTER 1939 Heinrich Himmler had retreated to Lindenfycht, the familiar villa above the reeds and bullrushes fringing the Tegernsee, and here he would stay for two weeks while Kersten tried his restorative magic on him. In the evenings he played bridge with Marga and her sister Lydia. The remodelled upper floor was complete, and the family moved back into their rooms. There was even a needlework room, on Marga's insistence. Mother and daughter tried out summer dresses, but it was still winter down here in Bavaria. They went shopping in Munich but Marga's feet were playing up on her again from so much gardening. The Kalcksteins

came over at Easter, a rather odd SS *Hauptsturmführer* and his family, but there was little opportunity for small talk. She hosted dinners for Heini's other eccentric friends, the Hanns Johsts, and went over to see the Schirachs and their neighbour the Party Treasurer, Xaver Schwarz. On Easter Sunday Heini's lonely mother came from Munich, bringing his older brother and their family.

On April 17 they drove to Munich, where Heini went to say goodbye to his mother – 'Mummy,' in his diary – and then flew back to Berlin; Marga left Lydia in Gmund. With two days left before Hitler's spectacular fiftieth birthday celebrations, nothing had changed in Dahlem. Over dinner Hitler casually informed Göring of CASE WHITE – war with Poland. The field marshal was dismayed but Hitler reminded him that he had handled the other situations skilfully.

'Püppi and I are alone in the villa,' Marga wrote on April 19. 'Pappi,' as she now called her husband, 'is absent, as usual.'

HITLER'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY would bring the mightiest military parade Europe had ever seen. On its eve his young architect and city planner Albert Speer presented to him the East–West Axis, a broad boulevard plunging through to the Brandenburg Gate. Hitler cruised ceremonially along it with a column of automobiles, while fireworks stitched a swastika into the darkening sky; Himmler gave the long-suffering domestics the day off, so they could all go downtown and see the spectacle. He took Marga and Gudrun to watch the torchlight parade from the VIP balcony of the propaganda ministry. Gudrun was 'quite enchanted'. Himmler saw Hitler later that evening, and the Führer probably broke the news about WHITE to him as he had to Göring the day before.

On the birthday morning itself Hitler again received Himmler. His *Leibstandarte* were in full black SS-uniform. Himmler and his closest colleagues wearing their black steel helmets drove into the Chancellery courtyard to offer congratulations, then all proceeded into Wilhelmstrasse to take the salute from the SS and police. Hitler had told Keitel to show the world all their latest artillery, heavy tanks and anti-aircraft guns, and fighter and bomber-squadrons roared overhead; Hitler had invited the Czech President Hácha, accorded

all the honours due to a Head of State; the corps of foreign diplomats was mustered to a man.

Somewhat at a loose end after that, Himmler attended the wedding of his adjutant 'Hajo' von Hadeln, who had escorted Marga on their trip to Italy; Hajo would die from a shrapnel wound on the eastern front in 1943. Himmler's idea was that every member of his staff had to rotate between his desk job and active duty on the battlefield.

On April 25, he took a Party of senior officers over Dachau. Tours followed a set routine, said Baron von Eberstein, the Munich police chief. The commandant Theo Eicke met them with SS *Gruppenführer* Pohl at nine-fifteen, and took them to the community building where Himmler spoke for fifteen minutes about the purpose of such camps, now widely admired (if not by its inmates). Himmler showed off the bakery, carpenters' shop, property store, museum, and prison canteen – and there was whale-meat to sample. The tour went into laundry rooms, the camp hospital, and a prison barracks. The church which Himmler had erected was displayed, as well as commercial enterprises, a metal-working and carpentry workshop. Of the 3,479 inmates on that day, 2,090 were in *Schutzhaft*, held without charge in what is now termed 'administrative custody;' the rest were Jews, homosexuals, 'work-shy,' or other delinquents in German eyes.

BACK IN BERLIN, HIMMLER DICTATED, probably to Hedwig Potthast, a learned note setting down 'what I know' about the ancient tribe known as Varini, thanks to Tacitus and Pliny. 'The Varini probably settled near the Angls in Schleswig Holstein,' he dictated on May 2. 'A section of them migrated to Mecklenburg and Pomerania where the names Warnemünde and Warnitz near Stargard give trace of them. Another part went with the Angls and Saxons under Hengist and Horsa to Britain. The Varini settled on the Thames, which – I presume – is demonstrable by local place-names.' One section was dislodged to Bavaria and settled in the Miesbach region as the names Warngau, Oberwarngau, Osterwarngau showed. 'It always struck me that Miesbach is pronounced *Miabek* by the locals,' which was closer to the Lower German (*-beke*) than the Bavarian, *-bach*. 'And now I hear from Dr Gloger that in eastern Europe, east of the Oder

and the Carpathians, there were also Varini among the tribes which dominated in Russia after the turn of the times.' Tacitus was to first to refer to them in his text *Germania* as Varini. Pliny the Elder wrote that there were five tribes of Germans, *germanorum genera quinque, vandali, quorum pars burgodiones, varinnae, charini, gutones* meaning that there were five Germanic races: the Vandals, of whom the Burgundians were part, 'Varinnæ,' Charini and Gutones (Goths).

So Himmler relaxed that summer of 1939, idly reading up on ancient tribes like these, which suggest that he had imbibed more than a little of his father's lectures. On May 2 he went to see Hitler about Eberstein and reported that Eberstein had a cardiac complaint. He dictated a note: 'We will have to replace him as *HSSuPf.*,' the Senior SS and Police Commander.

He had a replacement in mind: Von Schade.

HITLER TRAVELLED DOWN to the Berghof. From May 13 to 19 Himmler and Hitler toured the West Wall, from Trier and Saarbrücken. At ten a.m. on May 20 they arrived at Munsterlager in Lower Saxony: no namby-pambies they, his SS regiment 'Deutschland' exercised with live ammunition. Count Ciano and the Italians came on May 21. Himmler went over with Ribbentrop, and dined with Hitler. Asked about rumours that Himmler had fallen out with Ribbentrop, Sir Nevile Henderson, the British ambassador, said that on the contrary when he was last in Ribbentrop's office, Himmler's photo was present, 'the only one except for the Führer's.' Many a minister and general discreetly noted Himmler's birthday in his pocket diary now.

39: *Oddballs and Soothsayers*

AS THEY GO THROUGH LIFE some men pick up the occasional friend whom we can heartlessly classify as oddballs — people whom they like to have around (yet might not so willingly produce at a social function). Himmler had such a Camelot.

Felix Kersten was the most enduring of these hangers-on, men who were put on the SS payroll, were privately paid from Himmler's pocket or from the account managed by Karl Wolff and topped up by the Circle of Friends.

Such friends leaven the stodge of daily life. Himmler had reached a station in life where he could afford to indulge a few such oddballs. There was Yrjö von Grönhagen, the Finnish explorer, or Kalckstein, who had spent his young life chasing after the Holy Grail – he had narrowed the search to a mountaintop chateau in France. Since he had fluent French, Himmler took him into his SS, and sent him back to France to research the Himmler family tree.

More than one had been brought in by 'Weisthor'– Colonel Wiligut – as a child might bring in a stray dog, or a cat might drag in a violated bird or mouse.

Otto Rahn was a poet, discarded after a year or two. He was a homosexual and he knew the S.S. penalty for that. Others like the astrologer Louis Wulff were hardier, and outlasted Himmler.

ONE SUCH OUTLANDISH CHARACTER was Walter Schellenberg, who became, to Germany's entire misfortune, Himmler's wartime chief of foreign Intelligence. His father was a piano maker. He had not joined the SS in expectation of wealth – nobody did. Trained in the law, he had worked on reforms at the Ministry of Justice. Himmler had first set eyes on him as a junior member of the SD party flying into Vienna that dramatic night in March 1938. We search the Himmler 1939 diary in vain for his name, but the two became increasingly close, until the last days of Himmler's life.

Nine years his junior, Schellenberg weighed around 185 pounds. 'Heydrich thought highly of him,' recalled Werner Best. On Best's recommendation, Himmler approved his appointment in January 1939 to Group IV-E, of Müller's Amt IV; that was effectively the counterintelligence branch of Heydrich's newly reorganised *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the RSHA. It would become Amt VI, foreign espionage. The whining, self-justifying Schellenberg, plagued by liver and bladder problems, who willingly went into enemy custody in June 1945, was determined to survive; he dusted the blame freely onto others, whom he named. Schellenberg complained when it was all over that Hitler would have nothing to do with him. Sancho Panza to Heinrich Himmler, he was the quixotic Reichsführer's shadow, until the last days. 'The only person who *understood* me was Himmler,' he said, choosing an oddly feminine turn of phrase. Without him, Schellenberg deflated like a balloon, into a rubbery rag.

Heydrich had first met Schellenberg in 1935 and took an interest in him. A rare guest to the Heydrich home, Schellenberg had taken a keener interest in Lina. Lina Heydrich was scathing about his successful 'treason,' and noted how the enemy had spared him while stringing up most of his comrades. Her remarks have the whiff of a woman used and cast aside. She was 'a wife whose frown sufficed to make the hangman shake in his boots': so Wilhelm Höttl put it in 1945. 'During the years 1937–38,' testified Höttl, 'marital difficulties increased and in order to avoid being made the pretext for a separation, Schellenberg stopped seeing her.' With Reinhard's untimely death, some people expected Schellenberg to marry Lina, but her usefulness to him had expired with her husband.

Himmler liked his officials to have regulated lives, with large families. Schellenberg divorced his first wife Käthe once she passed child-bearing age. 'He can turn on the charm,' wrote Höttl in one report, 'and when he does, the impression of being face to face with a nice, harmless, and quite ingenuous young man is all but irresistible.'

Schellenberg shunned alcohol, tobacco, and women. He worked from nine a.m. until midnight, and took meals, prepared by his secretary Maria Luise Schienke, in his office. Like Himmler, he was punctilious with money. He never ate more than his ration coupons allowed and turned over his monthly salary to Maria Luise. He would make enemies of every department head, like 'Gestapo' Müller. His memoirs, while coloured by a need to avoid the noose, are pervaded by devotion to Himmler. Thus he, Schellenberg, knew nothing of the Jews or what went on against them – but laboured mightily to preserve them from whatever the nastiness might be; he was ignorant of the 'mass killings,' meaning the 'Reinhardt' camps, but had heard of shootings on the eastern front; and so on.

Himmler fell for Walter Schellenberg, said associates. An unlikely friendship was forged, like father and son. Sometimes, said Maria Luise, Himmler phoned for his opinion. Himmler insisted that Schellenberg have two fearsome police-dogs. Schellenberg's youth was an obstacle, and he complained once to Himmler's Berlin adjutant Paul Baumert that colleagues did not take him seriously. Himmler turned over an upper floor of the RSHA headquarters to him, where Schellenberg had two sidekicks, Werner Krüger, and Heinrich Gaulke. Sadly, in January 1943 it came out that Gaulke was a closet homosexual; he was turned over to a firing squad. While sodomy seems to have been something of a requisite within the much-admired British secret service, it was still a capital offence in the SS; from top to bottom one might say.

HEINRICH HIMMLER PROBABLY YEARNED TO BE back in Berlin. He looked forward to seeing Hedwig, his private secretary, again.

Hedwig Potthast had joined his staff three years before. She was twenty-seven in 1939, educated, twelve years younger, and from a middle-class Rhineland family. She was born in Cologne on

February 6, 1912. Her father, Karl, son of a master-mason, was a retired sergeant. No slouches when it came to appraising female looks American officers deemed her to be the very model of the *deutsche Frau* – an attractive, demure woman, of the unassuming type.

The few portraits of Hedwig which survive bear this out. The one in the identity card issued to her in 1933 by the secretarial academy in Mannheim has her head shyly bowed, showing a broad expanse of forehead. Like Rudi Brandt, she was proficient in shorthand. Two or three years before coming onto Himmler's staff she completed an interpreter's degree in English, and held out for a posting where she could improve her skills – she had the usual problems with *stationery* and *stationary* and other pitfalls of the English language. Her dream was to work for the Bank of England. Instead, she was put to work in the Gestapo's newspaper library in Berlin, and when she protested, she was moved up into Himmler's private office (*Privatkanzlei*) in January 1936. The letters she typed for him are identified by '*Pt.*'

She was at an age when women start looking for a mate. She had a warm, affectionate nature. Heydrich famously said, 'You could warm your hands and feet' on Hedwig. Her older sister Thilde chided her for 'running wild,' but Hedwig had determined to go her own way.

After she met all the sporting requirements, with rowing as her chosen category, the Trier Rowing Society awarded her the Sports Badge on August 11, 1937, and the portrait in the certificate tells us what she looked like when Himmler saw her – wearing no make-up, as became the *deutsche Frau*. She found that staff like 'Wölfchen' irreverently referred to Himmler as 'King Heinrich,' or 'K.H.,' a nod toward his mild obsession with King Henry the Fowler. She liked skiing (in December 1944 she poked fun at his clumsy attempts). His wife, who positively enjoyed poor health, was twenty years Hedwig's senior. She was everything that Marga was not. She had calmly decided in 1938 that 'K.H.' would be as good a mate as any.

HEINI LECTURED HEDWIG POTTHAST ON THE PAGAN rituals and on the duty of the true Germanic woman, namely to produce lots of blonde offspring.

'He said he wished to be the father of many children,' a post-war

newspaper report quoted her as saying. 'Not for himself, but for the glory of Greater Germany.'

Those were not the most alluring of chat-up lines, but it was what many a girl of her age wanted to hear. Writing to her sister Thilde, she related an encounter with Heini on the winter solstice in December 1938: they had had a talk about *feelings* – the kind of talk to which such girls seemingly aspire – 'in which we told each other we were hopelessly in love with each other.' Probably at his suggestion, she left the Protestant church on May 2, 1939.

She had the usual minor disorders. She had difficulty sleeping, and resorted to the occasional Phanodorm tablet. She experienced gastric pains; the etiology was probably cardiovascular, according to the doctors. Talking with his own family doctor Fahrenkamp on December 16, 1939, Himmler inquired discreetly about Hedwig's current health. She complained of heart murmurs, he was told. On January 10, 1940, Dr Fahrenkamp mentioned in a letter to Marga, his patient, that he had sent six small bottles of drops to 'Miss Potthast' – oblivious of the consequences such mentions may have. Himmler still adopted a rigid stance on morals: lecturing Party leaders in the new air ministry building on June 2, 1937 he had inveighed once again against homosexuality and abortion as writing *finis* to the German people. (General Milch rated the lecture in his diary: 'Very good.')

On adultery the Party was more ambivalent. The Reichsführer knew that while Hitler frowned on his henchman taking younger wives, he turned a blinder eye on concubines. In one letter dated February 6, 1939, Hedwig seemed to show mixed feelings about all this, but Heini opened his heart to her, and she finally toppled in.

THE EVIDENCE suggests that she consummated their relationship on June 22, 1939, the summer solstice. In later letters, written in June 1941, he told her that it was two years since she said 'Yes,' and that he remembered her on the twenty-first and twenty-second of each month; women like men who remember anniversaries. There was a cryptic reference too, to solstices and to the coffee and cookies she gave him. He addressed her as *Sie* for several more weeks, and he still signed his name in full. He was besotted with her; and she with

him – which is how, were it not for his other little family, it should be.

Hedwig was sharing a small upstairs apartment at No. 47c, Bismarck Strasse, with her friend Käte Müller. The rendezvous in June 1939 seems however to have been Wiligut's former address at No. 33 Caspar-Theyss Strasse in Grünewald, a lush Berlin suburb. Five years later, on June 20, 1944, Heini reminded her: 'When you get this letter it will be just five years since we were so wonderfully, blissfully alone together and celebrated our betrothal in what became our love-nest in Kaspar-Th—— . May you be as happy as you make me every day!'

He bedazzled her with his grandiose ideas, his talk about his new SS 'Order', and all that might yet lie in their future, particularly once the somewhat older Führer and Hermann Göring had moved on. Karl Wolff admired Hedwig, but decided, so he later claimed, to abstain from making a move on her. Wolff would express astonishment that Himmler, 'a total novice and loser when it came to *l'amour*, let alone the erotic,' had managed to pull Hedwig, the apple of many an SS man's eye. Just one girl had figured in Heini's life before, remarked Wolff, and that had gone belly-up on him.

Formal as ever, Himmler wrote her in July 1939 – she was now convalescing at her parents' home in Trier – using a printed card:

> I survived the Day of Art(+) [*July* 12] well, but the Day was somewhat tiring, dragging on until three or four o'clock at night.
>
> The work keeps piling up but can be managed. I am sending you a book to read which I hope will please you.
>
> Thanks particularly for jogging my memory about the various red-letter days! Well, best wishes for your continued recovery and *auf Wiederseh'n* here in Gmund at the end of this month.

He added a ponderous language-joke as a footnote, about the *Tag der Kunst*: "+ *i.e.,* not a *calendar* day, as you know."

A week or two later, on July 18, 1939, he wrote again, still giving the impression that their relationship was just boss and secretary.

> Be a good girl and read the two booklets when you've got the time, and tell me what you think later. I hope you've still got good

digs. Get well soon, and best wishes, Heil Hitler! – H. Himmler, 18. vii. 39

Many a girl would have taken that language as terminal. But not Hedwig: they became involved. By early 1940 he was belatedly allowing her the *Du*. Visiting Kraków on January 28, 1940 he pencilled on the back of a picture postcard: 'I am very well. The trip was very interesting. I was very happy with both your letters. I wish you everything dear and good.' He signed it with the 'H' rune: '✻'. He had never used the rune on letters to Marga. Days later, on February 5, he sent a new card: 'I am wishing you all the love and goodness that one human being can think and feel within his heart. – ✻'

He began too to use her pet name as a child, Häschen, 'Bunny.' With the instinct that comes with advancing age, he knew that females need attention, the sense of being special.

He used the rune on every letter to Hedwig after that. In the guilty balancing-act familiar of men snared in such a predicament, he gave a brooch to Marga around this time too, made up of the same *hagal*-runes with which he signed off to Hedwig, and suggested to the workshop which made it that all SS men should give their wives one like this when their first child was born, though 'not too expensive.'

It had started as a belated adolescent love-affair of the kind he had eschewed during his puritan student years, but he benefited too from his own growing notoriety – the flame toward which females have fluttered in all history to their own occasional misfortune.

As for Hedwig, she willingly stood down from her job halfway through 1941 to become Heini's loyal concubine instead and she kept her new relationship secret from her parents. In return he treated her well. Were it not for the lasting nature of their affection, it could have been an object-lesson in seduction. Long after lesser men would flag, Himmler continued to pen postcards and fond messages to Häschen, even from the most distant battlefields, sometimes twice a day, while still writing dutifully to the older Marga. Hedwig too started to sign off with the 'H' rune, '✻'. The flow of letters from him continued until the very end, and Hedwig remained beholden to him long after.

'I don't understand all these nasty things they say about him,' she told a reporter in the summer of 1945, betraying how far he had compartmentalised his more secret life. 'He was really the nicest man.' He had once confided to her that his wife did not understand him; so one journalist added, but that may just be a tabloid flourish. Himmler told her he would not divorce his wife, for fear it might result in her early death, as she had been ill since Gudrun's birth – an illness which Marga's diary does not fully confirm.

Interpreter Eugen Dollmann told interrogators that unlike others in such a position Hedwig Potthast did not try to influence the Reichsführer. Few knew she existed, although she would bear him two children. Heini kept her a secret even from friends, like Darré.

Himmler had several adjutants, all young and fit. Willy Suchanek was his police adjutant, Werner Grothmann liaised with the armed forces. Himmler took the handsome young SS *Obersturmführer* Jochen Peiper everywhere he went. Peiper had been in Hedwig's affections before him, and had just married Sigurd Hinrichsen, her colleague and friend.

As Himmler's first adjutant, since mid-1939, Peiper had a desk in the ante room but knew only part of what was going on. There was an SS officer in Lublin called Odilo Globocnik, he later learned, whose job included constructing a 'tank ditch using Jewish labour.' Peiper was not present when Himmler received Heydrich – to discuss eliminating the Polish intelligentsia and the enemy Judea – and learned of the *Einsatzgruppen* only after the war. Living openly in France, he met an unpleasant end, murdered by unknown hands, burned to death in his villa in 1976 on Bastille Day.

The Americans had intercepted a telegram from Hedwig Potthast to Felix Kersten, which disclosed her location. They would take her prisoner in the Tyrol. 'After repeatedly protesting that she had burned all her letters from Himmler,' recorded the U.S. Seventh Army, '[she] finally admitted that she . . . couldn't bear to destroy anything so precious to her. Appropriate authorities have been notified.'

Most of the letters are now in private ownership in Chicago, where we were allowed to read sixty of them, written by Himmler to her, mostly in ink between 1938 and 1945.

THE HEART-MURMURS continued to trouble Hedwig. On August 29, 1940 Dr Fahrenkamp carried out further checks, coupled with a heart X-ray and electrocardiograms. The blood pressure was still low, and he mailed her a three-page medical report, addressed to her as the 'Private Secretary of the Reichsführer, Prinz-Albrechtstrasse.'

That was a Berlin street-address, it might be said, that was not calculated to calm the murmuring human heart.

40: *Marga makes a request*

THAT SUMMER OF 1939 BROUGHT a most unpleasant experience for Heini. Marga had begun dictating appointments to him, a common failing among wives. She had promised one wife, Erna, that she could get the husband, Baron Hermann von Schade, appointed police chief in Munich. That job had been held by Baron von Eberstein since October 1936 and he was chief of the SS *Oberabschnitt* South and *HSSPf* too. The *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* had been created by Himmler in 1938. 'It was a fancy title, but had real substance,' complained Eberstein afterwards.

Eberstein, six years older than the Reichsführer, was six-foot-one and efficient and upright in every sense, while Hermann von Schade was an SS *Brigadeführer*. He was twelve years older, and had twice failed to win a Reichstag seat; in May 1939 he had been shunted off to an SD inspectorate in Düsseldorf.

Notwithstanding what Himmler had reported to Hitler on May 2 about 'cardiac problems,' Eberstein was in both good health and standing with Hitler. On May 24 Himmler dictated a note: 'I reported to the Führer that SS *Obergruppenführer* Baron von Eberstein has a bad heart and would have to be replaced in SS *Oberabschnitt* South, as unfit for military service. The Führer regrets the sickness personally, but agrees.' Bowing to Marga's dictate, however, Himmler agreed to

replace Eberstein. In June, at a big SS officers' convention in the hall of the Deutsches Museum in Munich, Himmler told Eberstein that he was unfit, and he would be transferred to Saxony's ministry of the interior; indeed, Saxon files began arriving from Dresden. Himmler told Marga the deed had been done and she proudly took credit with Erna soon after.

Eberstein however was livid. He thought little of young Himmler, and accused him privately of megalomania. Besides, the appointment of police chiefs was not in Himmler's gift, he said; that was a matter for Wilhelm Frick, the Reich minister of the interior.

IN JUNE 1939 MUNICH hosted a military parade for the benefit of Germany's new Italian allies under the eyes of thousands of spectators and bemedalled veterans of the German and Italian armies. Hitler watched with the guests of honour from the steps of the Führer Building, as did Eberstein who had been given two weeks to brief Schade. Himmler was away, in Berlin, in fact indulging his summer solstice, his Mid Summer Night Dream, with Hedwig.

The parade was a shambles. Schade was a bundle of nerves. He sauntered over to Hitler, proffered an untidy salute, and wandered off. Hitler was thunderstruck. 'Who is that man?' he asked. Karl Wolff said it was their new police chief. 'What happened to Eberstein?' asked Hitler. Wolff retorted that he been sent on sick leave. 'That's not true,' Hitler exclaimed. 'I just saw him. He's right here on the steps!'

'That evening,' recalled Eberstein, 'I was ordered to see my superior, Gauleiter Adolf Wagner, and he told me the Führer had ruled that I was to stay on. A week later moreover I was appointed a *Ministerialdirektor* in the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior.'

He learned that Baron von Schade's wife was one of Frau Himmler's social circle. 'That's how it happened,' he related.

The score was bad: Eberstein: one, Himmler: nil. Worse, a *Ministerialdirektor* had tenure for life.

Himmler was summoned to the Berghof by overnight train, for a meeting on June 25. A day later, he received a smug two-page letter from Martin Bormann, no friend of aristocrats. The letter was marked 'personal,' and set out seemingly with relish:

> In full view of the Italian delegates, representatives of the Wehrmacht and State, and countless other observers, the SS officer *Baron von Schade* reported to the Führer in 'such a slovenly' manner that he has brought 'disgrace on the entire outfit.'
>
> The Führer has forbidden that *Baron von Schade* be given any further active employment in the SS, stating that *Baron von Schade* is fit only for a desk job somewhere – at best in some branch of your 'Allach Porcelain Manufacture.'

That stung. Himmler scrawled across the letter, 'Put in Schade's personnel file, HH.' Bormann reiterated that the Führer had said he felt ashamed for the entire SS: 'You are to punish Baron von Schade.'

Heinrich phoned Marga with the news.

GUDRUN WAS NOW nearly ten. Preparing to leave with her and friends for a seaside vacation, Marga wrote with some bitterness, 'Heini is away again for eight days.' Gudrun's education and general upbringing were suffering. Marga had seen Gudrun quietly sobbing on June 2, Friday, because most girls of her age had grown out of dolls; but her little friend Röschen, twelve, still liked them and on the fourth they were both playing happily together. Püppi read out loud every day but, noted Marga with resignation, 'It's really quite bad.'

On June 22, the summer solstice, they had gone to the Hotel Kaiserhof at Kühlungsborn on the Baltic for some weeks. 'For the first time in my marriage I am going on vacation without Heini,' she told her diary. She called in on her fading father – 'his condition is so-so, he's not in any pain and lies peacefully in bed' – and checked into a suite that gave a sea view. Heini promised to join her for their anniversary.

He phoned the Kaiserhof twice from Berlin on the twenty-sixth, the day after that Munich meeting with Hitler, to relate what she needed to know about about Baron von Schade. 'He says that Schades are not coming to Munich,' she recorded, rather missing the point. 'When Heini was called to the Führer, the unfortunate event had not taken place yet. Schade was summoned to the Führer, but he behaved so poorly that he was rejected.'

In an undated letter she wrote to Heini:

> *Mein lieber Guter*! I'm quite shattered about the Schade's. Can't we do anything about it? Eberstein was already going to quit more than once. Or is there some *intriege* [*sic*] behind it all, perhaps even one against you? I am with Püppi all day long and just keep thinking about it. I have to stick up for her [Erna] & and prove what a good friend I am. I don't trust writing, it may all turn out well. I will write it up in my diary and when I am gone you can read it. Püppi is playing with another child and his mother on the beach, & that gives me space. I am going to offer Aunt Schadi the "*Du*" if I get the chance. He'll just have to sweat it out, him and his stupidity. Could happen to anybody, right? All the best for these three days. We're all looking forward to you coming here on Sunday for supper. Greetings to my beloved, yours M.

In her private diary she echoed it: she was appalled, and searching for hidden hands: 'Is there some *intriege* behind it? Maybe even against Heini? But as a worried wife, one sees too black.' She decided: 'I am ready to offer Mrs von Schade the personal "*Du*" instead of the more formal "*Sie*" to show my friendship. Everybody will dump on her. I can see their chubby faces. . . Just have to grin and bear it.'

Heini's work was never-ending, she knew that: but why had he to be away so often? 'Just hope he stays fit.' She was feeling her age, and liked to lie down at midday for a while when she could lose Gudrun. 'She makes an effort to behave,' she wrote on June 26, three days after arriving at Kühlungsborn. 'I am off to the beach, where Püppi is playing with a small boy, supervised by his mother.'

In afternoons she could rest in their 'nice, neat' room at the Kaiserhof and let Püppi run down to the beach with her new friend. 'She loves to play, and I have my peace and can take a snooze.'

Her one worry up here on the Baltic was that Gudrun was doing poorly at school. The return date already looming over her as she wrote her diary on June 26, she added: 'So, on September 1, we'll be back in Berlin.' Poor Gudrun, she disliked Berlin: she had no friends there, and down at Gmund there was only Röschen, who was twelve.

Her reading was poor but, Marga consoled herself, September 1 would bring the new school year and much else.

Heinrich Himmler had told her nothing of what was brewing.

'First time, during my married life,' wrote Marga at Kühlungsborn, with almost lawyerly qualification, 'that I am here without Heini!' He had stayed in Berlin. 'He is always terribly busy,' she wrote, finding excuses for him. And, 'I am happy for him,' using the inverse code women use to mask true feelings. 'I just hope he stays in good health!' Her own health was enjoyably poor: her back, and she was too tired now to read books. 'I want him to come over for a few days so that we can celebrate July the Third together.' The words were laced with weak arsenic – surely he could not disregard their anniversary?

Heini kept putting it off. He said he'd come up in a day or two. 'He is now coming for sure on July 2,' she wrote on July 1. 'It will be three beautiful days.' Her back pains today were better than for some time, she decided, and she wrote to her husband: '*Mein lieber Guter*!

> Don't forget to bring your blazer with both pairs of light-coloured trousers and your bathing suit and other summer things too. The weather's horribly fickle and changes round in minutes. We are so looking forward to your arrival. Yesterday a letter came from Frau von Schade, from which I see she doesn't know why. We'll talk about it. Just don't bring so much to read with you, we also want to have something of you. We're going over now and hope you phone soon. Püppi is writing and reading every evening. I think she's scared of staying down [at school].

She added a postscript: 'Won't you look in on my father when you come through Kyritz? And don't forget my money.'

The Baltic weather began to change quickly between sunshine and showers. Heini had somebody call Marga to say he now had to stay in Berlin for the state funeral of a Great War veteran, General Wilhelm Knochenhauer, but he would come in a day or two. 'I hope so,' she recorded grimly.

The last two months of peace were ebbing away. Heini came to Kühlungsborn for three days, and when he left on July 5 he did as

Marga asked. She invited the Schade couple to join her – with the inevitable denouement: 'Mrs von Schade was here for two weeks, and her husband for eight days. It was too long and they got on my nerves.'

Marga Himmler and Püppi flew back south. She wrote to Heini on July 7: 'I was about to pay the bill at the Hotel Kaiserhof, and they asked me: Will you be paying for the Reichsführer too?' She scolded: "You can imagine how hideously embarrassing it was for me. We were wanting to go there again next year. I gave the housemaid and servant five marks each, perhaps you can send some money for the housekeeper Miss Wenkstein; cash is acceptable, I inquired of her."

Her worries all seemed so everyday.

From the Baltic, they flew a leisurely route taking in Himmler's Wewelsburg and spending a week in Düsseldorf on the way. They made several side-excursions, visited the famous annual garden show in Stuttgart, and headed on through violent thunderstorms along Hitler's new autobahns to Munich and then Gmund in mid-July. 'Heini was not home,' wrote Marga. 'He was in Munich for the Day of German Art. I did not go.

They planned several weeks' vacation. On July 23 they went to 'the Valepp,' their river valley. Here the Himmlers maintained a hunting lodge south of the Spitzingsee in the Bavarian Alps, one of three customs houses no longer needed. The lodge had to be readied for Arturo Bocchini, the Italian police chief. Marga went several times to Munich and back to Valepp. Gudrun and her friend Röschen ran wild and, 'we ate many wild berries.'

Miss Görlitzer came to tutor Gudrun during the vacation. Like sand in an hour-glass, Europe's final days of peace trickled away.

41: *Last Days of Peace*

THE HIMMLERS APPEARED UNDISMAYED by the intensifying situation. An aunt came to Gmund, saying she was scared to be away from her belongings 'in case of war;' but she stayed on until mid-August 1939. The Himmlers shared the commonly held view that somehow the Führer would pull it off again – another bloodless victory. 'For the first time,' wrote Ribbentrop's state-secretary Weizsäcker, 'we're finding the Italian alliance an encumbrance. Because over the last week our will to war has become much stronger. Himmler, Ribbentrop, and Gauleiter Forster have each been promoting the idea of war in their own spheres. Ribbentrop is guaranteeing that the British and French will remain neutral provided we can deal annihilating blows to Poland in the first three days. This he thinks is certain.'

Graf von Wedel visited Marga with the countess, looking healthier than before. 'In such a large household there is always something lacking,' Marga found, and she went off to Munich or Bad Tölz on shopping expeditions. 'There is so much going on in the house that I get very little done,' she wrote on August 8. 'I have not even started on a new book.' The Dutch ambassador came with his wife; they were a cultivated couple, and spoke excellent German. They made a better impression on the Himmlers than did Sven Olov Lindholm, 36, the Swedish National Socialist leader.

On August 15 Marga's father died of pneumonia. Himmler's black leather diary of these days shows he was away from his family on many days, lunching or taking supper with Hitler, weighing himself (147 pounds), and playing almost daily rounds of tennis with an adjutant. He talked with Hitler sometimes until 2:45 a.m., but seems to have kept no surviving record. Hitler studied air photographs and models of the long Dirschau railroad bridge from Poland to the Free State of Danzig, and deliberated with Göring, Himmler, and Brauchitsch on ways of tackling it – a dive bomber attack followed up immediately by a ground assault: a goods train would arrive from East Prussia in the last minutes before WHITE began, its trucks laden with concealed sappers and storm troops.

Heydrich often came to report to Himmler, while Peiper as adjutant went to sit with Wolff in the anteroom, not privy to what was discussed. Heydrich's department heads like SS *Gruppenführer* Heinrich Müller came now and again, as did Arthur Nebe, head of the criminal police.

Himmler and Heydrich now ran an efficient and well oiled organisation. It carried out orders without question, however irregular. Hitler 'decided to turn a few SS-Kommandos loose,' as Heydrich told Heinrich Jost, head of his Amt III. On August 10 he informed Alfred Naujocks that Hitler wanted a few 'incidents' along the Polish border – what are now called 'false flag' operations.

NAUJOCKS' PLAN WAS MACABRE BUT UP TO SS standards. Two hundred SS men were withdrawn from units in Silesia and sent to Bernau for training under a former police officer, SS *Sturmbannführer* Otto Hellwig. The plan was to put them into Polish uniforms on the day before the planned attack on Poland; they would attack German frontier guards and set fire to Customs posts. 'To make the whole thing realistic and serious,' Jost recalled being told, 'It wouldn't matter if a couple of men get killed.' The men put in Polish uniforms might have argued differently, but condemned convicts had no say in the matter.

A 'Polish' attack on a radio transmitter at Gleiwitz, was one incident to be staged by Naujocks; the Polish speakers among his men would

seize the studio and transmit an appeal for an 'uprising' against the Germans. 'The broadcast was abruptly broken off, shots were fired in the studio, and finally a corpse, with which Naujocks had previously been provided, was left lying on the floor close to the microphone riddled with bullets.' Heydrich put Heinrich Müller in charge of all this. Naujocks self-righteously stated that when he heard Hitler refer to the 'Polish frontier outrages,' in his speech declaring war on Poland, he began to lose faith in his Führer.

HIMMLER SPENT THE NEXT DAYS at Hitler's side. He phoned Marga most days – she had returned to Gmund on August 20 – and he fkew down from Berlin briefly on August 22. That day, Ribbentrop signed the historic pact with Stalin. Himmler saw it as a masterstroke. (Richard Schulze, then a young SS *Hauptsturmführer*, accompanied Ribbentrop to Moscow, and described to us the signing.) As Ribbentrop related later, 'Stalin toasted the Führer, but he toasted Himmler too, as the guarantor of law and order in Germany.' Rosenberg choked on that, and added with sarcasm, 'So – H. has wiped out communism, or at least those Communists who swear by Stalin, and Stalin calls quite needlessly for three cheers for the man who wiped out his believers. What a great man – said R. and Co.'

Talking with Hitler's new military liaison officer Colonel Nikolaus von Vormann, Keitel also spoke of Hitler's "genius"; like Keitel, Himmler believed that Hitler had pulled off the incredible: now they would face only Poland, without her allies France and Britain, and without Moscow. To von Vormann it all seemed disorganised, even chaotic. 'In the private residence of the Führer there thronged, besides Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Himmler, Brückner, Schaub, Hoffmann, Dietrich etc. thirty or forty Party bigwigs, whom I knew only from photos.' There were too the adjutants Schmundt, von Puttkamer, von Below, and Bodenschatz. There were telephone instruments perched on armrests of chairs and sofas. The brown Party uniform was everywhere.

On August 25, Himmler signed a laissez-passer for his masseur, Kersten, 'originally German, currently still a Finnish citizen,' requesting authorities to give him every assistance. At dawn next

morning, August 26, the Wehrmacht would strike. The British ambassador was announced, and Hitler withdrew with him, and set out what he wanted in return for rapprochement with Britain – in short, a free hand in Poland, to end what he called 'Macedonian conditions.' In return he promised German assistance in the event that Britain needed it, and to respect the frontiers in the west.

AT SIX P.M. HOWEVER THE FOREIGN MINISTRY reported the unthinkable, that Britain had, despite every prognosis, irrevocably signed her pact with Poland. It seemed a terrible reverse to Hitler. Half a million soldiers were already advancing on the Polish frontier, when the order reached them to halt right where they were. There were negative reports from France and Italy too. Mussolini had declared he was not ready for war, and would not join in. Hitler loped up and down snapping his fingers, pausing once to exclaim to Vormann, 'Cunning, that's what we need. Cunning like foxes.'

He sent for Brauchitsch. The army C.-in-C. arrived at seven p.m. Brauchitsch confirmed he could halt the attack even now; in fact, given seven days, he could have 'one hundred divisions' ready.

The *Forschungamt* dialled the air waves, but picked up no gloating comments. Hitler deduced that the King of Italy had told the French and British that Mussolini was staying out. Hitler despatched Vormann with orders. The colonel needed an hour to reach Zossen, the army's headquarters, and General Franz Halder, the chief of staff.

It was one a.m. before Hitler indicated he was withdrawing for the night.

HIMMLER PLAYED TENNIS NEXT DAY, THEN DROVE OVER to the Chancery where he stayed until far inro the night. It was a quarter to three when he finally left. It was now Sunday: he weighed himself again, 147 pounds. He lunched with Hitler, and played another round of tennis with an adjutant. Less closely informed now than Hedwig Potthast, Marga wrote him from Gmund on August 26 about bills which the ladies had run up in the hunting lodge at Valepp and the guest house they were constructing in the grounds of Lindenfycht: 'Our life here is calm and peaceful, and we're waiting. The radio is

switched on all day. I'm so glad you phone me every day.' Bormann noted on Sunday, August 27, in his diary, 'For the time being the Reichstag will not sit. After a brief speech, the Reichstag deputies were sent home by the Führer.' Hitler admitted that things looked grave, but he would still settle the eastern problem, '*so oder so*.' His minimum demand was for the return of Danzig and a solution of the Corridor problem; his maximum demand was for whatever a war would bring him – and he would fight that war 'with the most brutal and inhuman methods.'

Mussolini's attitude was, he now suggested, in their best interests.

Himmler dictated to Hedwig Potthast a running commentary on the last days of peace for her Hitler collection. One page of the dictation survives, dated August 27, 1939:

> [British] Ambassador Henderson came to see the Führer at ten-thirty p.m. and left the Reich Chancellery at 11:45 p.m. Afterwards Göring, Hess, Bodenschatz and I [Himmler] joined the Führer in the conservatory. The Führer was accompanied by Ribbentrop.
>
> He told us what the British offer contains. It was very courteously phrased, but contained nothing of real substance.
>
> Altogether, he was in a very good mood and mimicked in his inimitable way what Henderson had put forward – speaking German with a thick English accent.
>
> The Führer then indicated that he now has to aim a document at the British (or at the Poles) that is little less than a masterpiece of diplomacy. He wants to spent tonight thinking it over; because he always gets most of his best ideas in the small hours between 5 and 6 a.m.
>
> At this Göring inquired, '*Mein Gott*, don't you get any sleep even now? Or have you got insomnia again?'
>
> The Führer replied that he often dozes from three to four o'clock in the morning and then suddenly wakes up to find the problems arrayed in pristine clarity before his eyes. Then he jumps up and jots down a few key words in pencil. He himself doesn't know how it happens – all he does know is that in the wee hours of the

morning everything that might confuse or distract disappears.

An *Abwehr* colonel wrote in his diary: 'The Führer has told Ribbentrop, Himmler, Bodenschatz, etc., "Tonight I'm going to hatch something diabolical for the Poles – something they'll choke on."' Dr Goebbels arrived with his state-secretary Leopold Gutterer, now wearing the black uniform of an SS *Brigadeführer*. He carried a one-page report that the public was against war. Himmler backed Gutterer, and said that his SD was painting the same picture. It mattered not to Hitler. Himmler ducked out to seek his usual diversion in a game of tennis.

On August 28 he played tennis too, then changed to have lunch and supper with the Führer. He stayed on until one-fifteen in the morning, and on the twenty-ninth the routine was the same. He spent the evening of the thirtieth with Hitler, then found scales to weigh himself. His weight was creeping up, despite the tennis.

Weizsäcker told his diary: 'Göring has told the Führer, "Let's stop trying to break the bank!" to which the Führer retorted, "It's the only game I've ever played – breaking banks."'

Just after midnight on August 31, Schmundt informed Colonel Nikolaus von Vormann that Hitler had issued the order for WHITE, his First Silesian War, as he called it: it would start next day. Britain and France would not intervene. 'The Führer has pulled it off so far.'

Himmler confidently stuck to his routine. Tennis, lunch with the Führer, then evening with him, and 'at night in the office.'

Goebbels recorded the optimism: 'The Führer still does not believe Britain will intervene.' He added, 'The SS is given special orders for the coming night.' At 10:30 p.m. the radio made mention of incidents, including 'a Polish raid' on a transmitter at Gleiwitz and other 'provocations' near Kreuzburg and Hochlinden. The *Forschungsamt* picked up evidence that the western alliance was crumbling.

IN PRINZ-ALBRECHTSTRASSE AT ONE-THIRTY A.M. on September 1, Reinhard Heydrich unscrewed his pen and wrote these farewell words to his wife and two sons: 'I hope my safe never has to give up this letter to you. As a soldier of the Führer and as a good husband and father however, I have to think of everything. At this hour Adolf

Hitler, Führer of our great Germany, has reached the decision: at 4:45 a.m. the German armies begin their advance, and at ten a.m. the Reichstag meets. I don't think any harm will come to me, but should fate dispose otherwise –,' and he set out how to dispose of his effects. There is a postscript: 'Neumann [his adjutant] has notes on my work, and knows many an anecdote on my doings.' The 'anecdotes' were. Neumann confirmed, the false-flag operations.

Lina Heydrich, like Marga Himmler, had been kept in the dark. She recalled, 'My time was wholly taken by my own duties as mother and housewife, and so I heard only what my husband was able to tell me without breaking his oath of silence.'

Like so much else, Himmler's diary ended up in America. The black leather-covered notebook measures 4½ by 3½ inches and has '1939' imprinted in gilt letters in one corner. With Himmler, we open September 1, 1939, the day that Hitler's armies fall upon an unloved Poland, as he pencils the figure [1] in red, and enters: 'Berlin – Reichstag. War against Poland. Tennis. Evening with Führer.'

He was in the Reichstag at ten a.m. to hear Hitler speak. He heard him promise to fight a chivalrous war: 'I shall undertake each operation,' Hitler announced to applause, 'in such a manner that women and children are neither the target nor the victims,' and perhaps Himmler smiled that indulgent smile. The next day, September 2, the Reichsführer buttonholed Colonel Vormann and delivered his familiar homily about his burden, the policeman's lot. 'A policemen's job is to keep order, he's never popular,' he amplified, adding that nobody would ever understand what it took – for example the Gleiwitz transmitter affair.

Vormann stared blankly. 'I didn't do him the favour,' he wrote, 'of listening to his somehat bombastic (*schwülstigen)* remarks.' I have never understood the influence that this chinless, pince-nez wearing man with egregious bad manners, exerted. . . His proximity left me with physical discomfort, and to see him eat was torture.' No, like many army officers, he was not an admirer of Himmler.

Himmler jotted routinely: 'Berlin. Tennis. Lunchtime and evening at the Führer's,' and he added '[2].' The war would not take long.

A letter came from Bavaria, from his daughter Gudrun. 'I wish

you all the best. I'm playing with Edith. We eat chicken very often. Yummy!'

Mechanically, Himmler endorsed it: 'Wrote Püppi, 2.IX.1939, HH.'

ON THE MORROW, SEPTEMBER 3, THE BAD news at the Reich Chancellery was that the British ambassador had booked a morning slot, nine a.m., to deliver a Note. There was no doubting what that was about. Ribbentrop ducked out, and detailed *Gesandter* Paul Schmidt to accept it. Vormann found groups clustered around Goebbels, Lammers, Hess, and Himmler. Shortly Schmidt arrived carrying the Note: an ultimatum, timed to expire at eleven a.m. Britain would declare war unless Germany ended hostilities with Poland forthwith and withdrew her troops to the frontier. At 11:30 a.m., British Ambassador Sir Nevile Henderson duly advised that Britain now considered herself at war. Göring arrived at midday, and privately summed up: 'If we lose this war, God help us.' Hitler ordered Vormann to send this instruction to the army: 'Our side is not to begin hostilities against France in any event.'

Himmler noted the news without emotion: 'Mummy arrives Berlin' – his new name for Marga, arriving for her mobilisation.

Pacing up and down in the conservatory, Hitler dictated four proclamations one after the other, without mentioning France, then ordered them typed in draft. Putting on his eye-glasses, he corrected the drafts, and ordered departure for the front that evening.

IN A CONVOY OF CARS Hitler and his men set out along deserted streets for Berlin's Anhalt railroad station. His overlong special train 'Amerika' waited, protected at each end by flak cars. At nine p.m. the train hauled out, heading for Bad Polzin, the headquarters of Army Group North on the Polish border. Karl Wolff was assigned a compartment in Hitler's train; perhaps Himmler wanted an officer less full of himself near him. He himself would follow with Hans Lammers and Ribbentrop in his own train, labelled only SZH, 'Sonderzug Heinrich.' 'Declaration of war, England and France. Special train departs. [3]' – Day 3 of the First Silesian War.

Poland's future? Hitler had no firm plans. As the train clicked and

clattered over the rails heading eastwards he talked about the clusters of German populations scattered across the Balkans, Russia and the Baltic states, and how he would fetch them back into the Reich; the population of Germans in Italy's South Tyrol would be moved to the mountain region around Zakopane. He would strip Warsaw of its Poles and Jews – or raze it to the ground, an alternative plan.

Early next day Hitler's train pulled into Bad Polzin. General Fedor von Bock reported to him. Schmundt failed to keep the Himmler party out of the motor convoy that started for Culm later that day – seventy-eight vehicles: Hitler's car and adjutants, personal cameras at the ready, followed two armoured cars, then six three-axled Mercedes followed by two more armoured cars and seventy-two other cars, carrying Himmler, Ribbentrop, Lammers, Bormann, and the rest. A cloud of Pomeranian dust was thrown up by the first cars.

They were inside Poland now. What must the punctilious *Ordnungsmensch* in Himmler have thought as they motored past the squalor, the chaos and the litter? There were knots of Poles standing in the swirling dust, among them many Jews, in high-crowned hats and caftans, their hair braided and tangled in ritual ringlets, like caricatures out of mediæval drawings. There were two million Jews living in Poland, whom Germany must now inherit.

HEINRICH HIMMLER WAS NEARLY THIRTY-NINE, and in 1939 the most violent years lay before him as SS chief and chief of national police. Unhoped-for historic victories would give way to horrific defeats, as Germany found herself out of time and outflanked by half the world, in hidden alliances largely engineered and organised by outraged Judea; the enemies ganged up against Germany and committed unspeakable acts against her civilian population. Himmler would find himself entrusted with the forced transfer of millions of ethnic Germans from all over Europe into the Reich, and with easing the Jews and other self-proclaimed enemies out – back to 'the East' and beyond. If he no longer believed in the God of his youth he still believed in some kind of Providence.

He had yet to see a single dead person.

Epilogue

HIMMLER'S INTEREST IN EXPLORING DISTANT tribes will fade; he will give up his attempts to learn English and other foreign tongues. His interest in new sciences continues, and he seizes on each new field of science that opens up – electronics, ballistic missiles, rocket engines, synthetic rubber production, agriculture. His own empire, the SS, is solid and expanding. He aspires to embed trusted men in every ministry, or convert their officers into honorary SS men.

He will have homes in Berlin and Bavaria, and eventually in East Prussia and the Ukraine; he spaces his headquarters through the battlefields, though always twenty or thirty miles from Hitler's. His health improves, though never perfect: he likes his cigars, often smokes cigarettes, drinks beer or wine. Felix Kersten provides for gut comfort, while Dr Theo Morell's injections take care of the rest. Himmler suffers from worsening sleep patterns as the war years progress and his towering sense of guilt marches forward.

He will remain Hitler's loyal disciple to the end. Occasionally, after a particularly grim patch, he may silently question his own conscience, and he sends others to Sweden or Switzerland to inquire vaguely about how things stand. That Himmler considers himself a possible negotiating partner of the Allied leaders in 1945 speaks little for the

one or the other. A phone call to a camp commandant in August 1944 will suffice to send a political opponent like Ernst Thälmann to his death; an importunate admirer will find herself noosed as the war teetered to its end. Those whom he had used as negotiating instruments he will callously discard. He will consign the lawyer Carl Langbehn to the hangman, ignoring Gudrun's entreaties.

Himmler becomes blind to his own growing lawlessness, but the same sadly has to be said of most war leaders. He will be invited to attend a mass shooting only once, in August 1941, and the spectacle so haunts him, that he avoids witnessing one again. That his men are deleting entire generations, and all their descendants as yet unborn, does not disturb him – hecatombs of artistic geniuses, literary, musical and scientific, will lie for all eternity rotting and untested, in their execution pits.

It is police work, and the policeman's lot is never a happy one.

Author's Notes

ABBREVIATIONS USED

AA – Auswärtiges Amt, German Foreign Office

AGp – Army Group

BDC – Berlin Document Center, of US Mission, Berlin

CV – curricumulm vitae, CV

CSDIC – Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre

CX/MSS – Intercepts by Bletchley Park, decoded from monitored wireless traffic

DJ – Author's private microfilm

FO – British Foreign Office; now the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

HA – *Hauptarchiv*; Central Archives

HL – Hoover Library, Stanford, California

IfZ – Institut für Zeitgeschichte, history institute, Munich

IMT – International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg

IRR – Investigative Records Repository [Ft. Meade files], now in NA, College Park

IWM – Imperial War Museum, London

KV – PRO, Home Office records class, *e.g.,* piece KV 196

KZ – *Konzentrationslager*, concentration camp

MI5 – Military Intelligence, Section 5: domestic police intelligence

MI6 – Military Intelligence, Section 6: foreign intelligence

MS – manuscript (or typescript)

NA – US National Archives; its records are organised in Record Groups, *e.g.,* RG.238, the wartime files of World War II

ND – Nuremberg Document, produced for IMT

NLA – National Library of Australia, national archives in Canberra

PRO – Public Record Office, London. British national archives. A War Office file might be cited as 'PRO file WO.171/3969,' *i.e.*, Piece 3969

RGBl. – *Reichsgesetzblatt*, National Law Gazette

RGVA – Russian federation archives; *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv*

RSHA – *Reichsicherheits Hauptamt,* National Security Central Office

SHA – *Sicherheits Hauptamt,* Security Central Office

T175 – The microcopy of documents filmed by the US National Archives, in this case SS records in RG238; divided into numbered rolls

TRP – Five volumes of largely secret Papers provided by Prof. Hugh Trevor-Roper to the author

UNM – University of New Mexico

UP – United Press agency

USFET – Headquarters, U.S. Forces, European Theater

USHMM – U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC

VfZ – *Viertelsjahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* quarterly of the IfZ

WASt – *Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle*, a postwar German government agency charged with tracing soldiers

ZS – *Zeugenschrift*, in IfZ collection

Chapter 1: A Murder in Lüneburg

11 'the house prepared': Col. Louis Michael Murphy's handwritten statement dated February 11, 1964, to Heinrich Fraenkel (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque: Heinrich Fraenkel papers). We thank Roger Manvell and fellow biographer Heinrich Frankel for having deposited their working papers at UNM. For our files, see www.fpp.co.uk/Himmler.

12 *footnote*: see facsimile in David Irving, *Nuremberg, the Last Battle* (London, 1996). The Yalta quote is from James Byrnes' transcript; see *Churchill's War*, vol. iii (forthcoming).

12 deep purple: Dr C J Wells wrote to his wife Vera, 'The dramatic rapidity of death I anticipated but slightly. There were [*sic*] a slowing series of stertorous breaths which may have continued for half a minute, and the pulse for another minute after that. The stench coming from Himmler's mouth was unmistakably that of hydrocyanic, and the dose must have been enough to kill an elephant' (*Independent on Sunday*, May 21, 1995). A professor of forensic medicine specialising in biochemistry, who asks to remain anonymous, states that a cyanide victim has a distinct bluish tint to his face (cyanosis); or, if another agent is used, 'cyanide could be used to mask it' because of its distinctive aroma. – Wells died on August 15, 1975. His sons live in Suffolk and Worcestershire, U.K.

13 muscled: Murphy's own unpublished memoirs, written evidently much later, were made available to us by his nephew Dermot Murphy, Apr 27, 2010: 'Himmler . . . had walked into one of my interrog. camps and I drove down to see him from Luneburg. After questioning him and looking for cyanide poison capsules (and found two), I was not satisfied so I drove him back to Luneburg to a house prepared for such people and had him examined by a doctor. In the course of this examination, Himmler bit on a capsule he had in his mouth.'

14 no gaps in his teeth: 'Reichsminister Heinrich Himmler, Report on Dentition, Cadaver examined at 11 hr to 13.15hrs on 25 May 45 at 31a Uelsenerstrasse' [*sic*], sgd. G R Attkins, Major.

14 cringing: Personal diary of Maj. Norman Whittaker, OC Defence Company, in Imperial War Museum (IWM), London, archives.

15 Edwin Austin, interviewed by Chester Wilmot of the BBC at 9 a.m. on May 24, 1945 (We have transcribed the recording, which is Track 28, side 2, on CD41, disc 033, '*Victory In Europe 1944–1945*'.) See too the Russian account: Boris Chavkin and A M Kalganov: 'Die letzten Tage von Heinrich Himmler. Documents from [Zentral-]Archiv des Föderalen Sicherheitsdienstes,' in: *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte,* 2000, vol. 2; and David Storm Rice's report, May 24, 1945.

15 Enigma: See the Obituary of Col. Michael Osborn, b. Jul 28, 1917, d. Jan 15, 2010, publ. in *The Daily Telegraph*, Feb 18, 2010. Osborn had accompanied Murphy from Barnstedt. A highly decorated (MC and DSO, won at Tobruk) officer of the Second Army, Osborn was one of the first to enter Bergen-Belsen, to investigate rumours of a typhus epidemic.

14 Norman Whittaker left the unit for demobilisation on Aug 20, 1945. His war diary, Second Army Defence Company, WO.171/3969) records that SS *OGruf.* Prützmann was 'taken into custody' at 6:30 p.m. on May 16, 1945 and 'removed under escort' at 11 a.m. the next day. His 'suicide' after that is controversial. Other sources say Prützmann died at Fort Diest (Camp 020) in Belgium: Prützmann 'hanged himself and was buried on the ramparts in the darkness of the night.' *MI5 and the Nazis. The Official History of MI5's Wartime Interrog. Centre* (Public Record Office, 2000), page 55. SS *OGruf.* Kurt Daluege was brought to Lüneburg on May 17, 1945, and turned over to the Czechs, who hanged him. SS *OGruf.* Maximilian von Herff, SS chief of personel, died mysteriously in captivity on Sep 6, 1945: no death certificate was issued. His final resting place is Cannock Chase, Staffordshire (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIS3wepXTyw).

14 H Russell-Jones, in a 1997 letter to *Rose & Laurel* (the journal of the Intelligence Corps) reported, 'Himmler was so hectored and ordered-about that, fearing a beating up, he crunched on the cyanide capsule secreted in his mouth. The scene was shambolic, "but of course the whole affair was glossed over".' A 'beating' was what Himmler had no reason to anticipate.

15 tore his signature: Selkirk Panton, *Daily Express*, May 28, 1945. He concludes (*ibid*., May 26, 1945) with a pertinent question: 'We shall never know why for two days he allowed himself to be humiliated, stripped naked, and repeatedly searched before crushing the phial of poison.' See too his article, 'The man who killed millions,' in *Man* (Sydney, Feb 1954). In his despatch of May 24, at 8:30 p.m., Panton reported: '…suddenly British army doctor saw purple tip of phial half inch long quarter inch wide appear between Himmler's teeth for split second… had kept phial in mouth several hours all through his interrogations by British officers.' Panton's papers are in the National Library of Australia (MS.5808) and his teletype despatches May 24–28, 1945 (Folder 41) are of particular interest.

15 Murphy's statement suggests to us he never saw the cyanide capsule. 'As regards the capsule, this was minute – certainly not an inch in Diameter [*sic*]. Himmler had no food or dinner in my presence and there is no doubt in my mind that from the time I met him to the time of his death one capsule was in his mouth. So far as I remember from the one taken from his clothes, this was of thin metal – strong enough to withstand careful mastication and liquids especially if the other side of the mouth was used – but not strong enough to withstand a decision to break it.' He

was not in the room. None of those statements matches the *glass* suicide capsules issued. – Charles Whiting states in *The Search for 'Gestapo' Müller* (London, 2001), pp.66 et seq., that SS *Gruf.* Arthur Nebe ordered 950 such capsules in 1944.

16 Austin: 'After a struggle, uh, lasting a quarter of an hour in which we tried all methods of artificial respiration under the directions of the doctor, 'e died, and when 'e died, we threw a blanket over 'im. And left 'im.' (BBC)

16 the doctor examined: Wells is sure that he was *alone* in the room with Austin and HH. Murphy's colourful version is at odds with this: 'The doctor started his examination with the search. He said, "Open." Himmler opened, and immediately he [Wells] saw a small black knob sticking out between a gap in the teeth on the right head side lower jaw. He shut his mouth at once. Once more the doctor said, "Open," and Himmler opened. The doctor went closer, and with his fingers extended and closed inserted them into Himmler's mouth. Immediately he bit hard, hurt the doctor and broke the phial. I dived for Himmler's feet and threw him to the ground, turned him on his stomach and tried to stop him swallowing. I shouted for a needle and cotton which arrived with remarkable speed! I pierced the tongue and with the cotton threaded through held the tongue out. But it was no good. With many convulsions he died in about fifteen minutes.'

17 step over to the window: Reuters, May 24, in *The Times*, May 25, 1945: 'Everything seemed normal, but in order to make sure the medical officer brought him to the window and told him to open his mouth again.' At 11 p.m. however there was only weak starlight and a moon rising above the due-southern horizon: Uelzener Strasse runs due north and south. The sun had set two hours earlier, at 9:22 p.m., CEST. In July 2008 Chris Meyer used an astronomy program, Starry Night Pro Plus 6, to compute for us precise sky conditions at Lüneburg at that time.

17 finger nails. But see the Reuters despatch from Second Army headquarters, May 24, in *The Times*, May 25: 'Throughout this time [of the drive from Barnstedt] he was not seen to put anything in his mouth, although on the way a Colonel [presumably Murphy] who was sitting with him in the back of the car noticed that he was biting his nails and rubbing his cheek.' The doctor did not notice any chewed finger nails.

17 Whittaker's unit diary: Second Army Defence Company, War Diary (PRO file WO.171/3969; and see files WO.208/4474 and /4431).

19 'Jimmie' the dentist: Whittaker's personal diary (IWM) continued, 'Maj. G R Atkins [*sic*. Attkins] prepared the death mask, which is still kept at the Royal Dental Corps Museum at Aldershot,' wording which shows that the diary was not written at the time. – *Daily Telegraph*, Feb 16, 2011: 'Conspiracy theories surrounded Himmler's death, after Army personnel

were ordered to sign the Official Secrets Act.'

18 Gen. Sir Miles Dempsey: the commander of Second Army was in the area that day; his diary (WO.285/12) makes no reference to the episode. On May 21, the day on which HH's adjutants were arrested, Gen. Dempsey had spent the afternoon until four-thirty p.m. visiting 'German detention camps at Westertimke.' Murphy stated: 'I telephoned Gen. Dempsey to get permission to let the Press know [that] H. was dead. . . D. said I must first get Russian approval. It was 24 hours before they arrived to view the body. Photos I have taken they would not believe. When they arrived they grudgingly agreed it might be Himmler.'

18 Message Form, Lieut. Col. M. Murphy, FSS Second Army to Gen. M C Dempsey, GOC Second Army HQ, May 24, 1945 06.00hrs. The original telegram is now in private hands in Australia.

19 Williams was there: Murphy's telex to Williams, GSI at Second Army, is in the file WO.208/4431. – British Movietone news filmed the death scene (https://youtu.be/a2OtFN9FEsw). – Lance Cpl. Bill Carrot, on guard duty at No. 31a Uelzener Strasse, told driver Norman Redford of the Defence Company's transport section to bring his Ensign Selfix folding camera. 'The body was not in a very good position for taking a photograph,' recalled Redford later, 'so we propped him up against an upturned table which we had covered with a blanket.' He took a snapshot by available light. Norman Redford, 'The demise of Heinrich Himmler 1945,' undated.

19 water splashes: *The Manchester Guardian*, May 25, 1945: 'Himmler's Suicide at British HQ. Poison Phial hidden in Mouth.' This perceptive journalist also noted without further comment: 'Although in British hands for two days, he was able to secrete an inch-long phial of potassium cyanide behind his gums until a medical examination was held.'

19 artist: On June 2, 1945 the British weekly magazine *The Illustrated London News* published the sketches, made by Capt. Bryan de Grineau, with the official version of the end of Heinrich Himmler: 'The medical officer asked him to open his mouth, but not being able to see sufficiently well, took the prisoner over to the window and told him to open his mouth again.' It also prints a photograph of 'the poison phial, one of two he carried, surrendered by Himmler to the medical officer.' It has demonstrably not been used.

19 sketch. It identifies the three Russian officers as Lieut. Col. Ievlev, Capt. Kutchin and Col. Gorbushin. According to *The Manchester Guardian*, May 25, 1945, these were Marshal Zhukov's representatives supervising the German surrender.

19 removed the brain: Report, 'SCIENTISTS TO STUDY HIMMLER'S BRAIN,' in *Stars and Stripes*, Sep 7, 1945; according to *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Sep 15, 1945, printing a report from London, Sep 14, HIMMLER'S

BRAIN FOR BRITISH MUSEUM, 'Himmler's brain preserved in alcohol will be sent to Britain for examination by brain specialists. The brain will later be presented to the British Museum" (https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/48667750).

20 at dead of night: 'Took the body out in a truck for its last ride. Hell of a job to find a lonely spot. Anyhow, we did find one and threw the old basket into the hole which we had dug.' The four men were Whittaker and Austin, and two sergeants William Ottery und Raymond Weston of the Welch Regiment. (Austin, it has been pointed out, could not drive.)

20 Whittaker made sketch maps of the grave: see letter from Brig. E Gask, Deputy Chief, Intelligence Div, Bad Oeynhausen, to Lieut. Col. E M Furnival Jones, MI5, Jun 26, 1946 (WO.208/4431).

21 Guy Liddell diary, May 25, 1945 (PRO file KV.196).

21 date of capture: The arrest docket on 'Hi[t]zinger' is dated May 22, 1945, 17:00 hrs. But see the Interrogations of HH's adjutants Werner Grothmann and Karl Heinz Macher, arrested with him. Barnstedt report, Camp 031, Preliminary Interrog. Report, 031/Misc/19, May 24, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4431); of Grothmann, 21 AGp Interim Report DIC/D/CI/17, dated Jun 13, 1945 (WO.208/4474); and the 21 AGp DIC/D/126 Interrogations of Gen. d. Waffen SS Hans Jüttner and Grothmann: CSDIC(UK) BLA, Jul 24, 1945 (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR, Investigative Records Repository [Ft. Meade files], personal name files, box 85, XE-000632: Himmler dossier); and of Macher, Oct 23, 1945 (WO.208/4431). These show they were captured with HH on May 21 – two days before his death. And see the statement of Arthur Verdun Britton Schrijnemakers, in 'L'ex-sergent Britton nous conte comment il arrêta Himmler sur le pont de Bremervorde), *Le Soir*, Brussels, 23 May 1970, page 5.

20 when Himmler killed himself: The magazine *After the Battle* does a workmanlike job of tracing and photographing HH's final route through Germany; it has unimportant errors, *e.g.*, confusing Rudolf Brandt with Karl Brandt, Hitler's surgeon, and saying that Profs. Brandt, Gebhardt, Ohlendorf and others were 'executed by the Allies' – they were hanged by the Americans, not the Allied IMT. It does note, though without explanation, that several authors wrote accounts 'none of which bear each other out,' and that Brig. W Williams, Chief of Intelligence at 21 Army Group, denied 'being there himself' (p.33; he was there). The magazine traced Dr Wells just days before his death (Aug 11, 1975), and could not interview him; they obtained his own 'notes on the affair'. Maj. Norman Whittaker CO of the Defence Company of Second Army HQ died on Sep 1, 1958 but also kept a personal memoir, which his son Ian provided to *After the Battle*.

21 John C Schwarzwalder (1917–1992), *We Caught Spies* (New York, 1946),

pp.276–284; and 'The Strange Death of Heinrich Himmler. Here is the authentic, eye-witness story,' in *Coronet* magazine, Jan 1947, vol. 21. no. 3, pp.9–13; the editors of which add, 'Maj. Schwarzwalder was on the scene when Himmler died.' Unlikely. His papers are in the HL. It is surprising how many Jews mistakenly thought they were present, under either their real or assumed names. Belfast-born Vivian Herzog (Chaim Herzog, later Israeli president) was one who wrote of his presence. H-F —, author of the FSS report, adds his suspicion that it was done 'to add a little bit of drama' to his memoirs. Herzog came to believe it: See his obituaries – *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 18, 1997: he was 'one of the last British officers to question . . . Himmler,' and *New York Daily News*, Apr 20, 1997, quoting his memoirs, *Living History*: 'Out of his gleaming Nazi uniform, [Himmler] looked like a drab and unimposing clerk.' – This unfortunate Jewish trait, mistaken memory, was to prove a problem in researching HH's biography.

Another Jewish 'witness' is Mark Lynton, *Accidental Journey, A Cambridge Internee's Memoir of World War II* (Woodstock, New York, 1998), pp.182–185. Born Max-Otto Löwenstein in Stuttgart, he served with 3 RTR, a British tank unit. His account offers few names of people or locations; he describes the two adjutants 'after two weeks' telling the camp commandant at Barnstedt that the 'Reichsführer-SS' desired to see him. Transferred to the Lüneburg house, HH had asked '*Sprechen Sie Deutsch*?' whereupon Löwenstein/Lynton volunteered to interpret. HH was assured that Montgomery would come the next day. A cot was installed for HH, and Löwenstein went to sleep elsewhere in the building, to be shaken awake with the news that HH was dying on the floor, bluish in the face, with 'a distinct smell of bitter almonds.' Lynton/Löwenstein was ordered to take the body out in a truck to bury it. 'An hour later I could not have told anyone where we put him.' This also is not a reliable account.

22 trophies: Second Army sent HH's looted belongings over to the Control Commission for Germany. At the end of May 1945, Capt. Donald McPherson found a fellow officer there wearing HH's eye patch, 'If you hurry along, there may be something left.' 'All that remained,' wrote McPherson, 'were the blanket in which Himmler had been sick, the frame-work of his rucksack, and some razor blades and a tube of shaving cream which he had acquired in Denmark. I took the shaving cream and razor blades which I now send to you. Others had taken his black silk shirts, silk pyjamas, silk socks, silk handkerchiefs, and his cigarette case, all monogrammed with his initials, two overlapping H's. One officer used to parade in the mess sporting HH's braces, sticking his thumbs under the straps and stretching them back and forth, for they were made of that wartime rarity, the finest elastic' (Military Intelligence Museum, Chicksands).— The reference to 'silk' underwear was a common smear. The belongings have been acquired

by the wealthy collector Kevin Wheatcroft of Leicestershire. The eyepatch is now in the Copenhagen Resistance-museum. According to the museum description, the patch was handed over to a Danish intelligence officer 'while he was assisting the British in questioning Himmler.' Those records have vanished. At the foot is a penciled note: 'This story agreed by Mr Neil McDermott Q.C. formerly GSO1 (Int b) at HQ 21st Army Group, though it added that 'a gentle interrogation by MI5 reps also took place.' (Intelligence Corps Archives, Military Intelligence Museum, Chicksands).

22 a second brass casing: Thomas Selvester, the cdt. of Camp 031, Barnstedt, wrote in 'Heinrich Himmler,' typescript, for Roger Manvell in 1963: 'I did however send for thick bread and cheese sandwiches and tea, which I offered to Himmler, hoping that I would see him if he removed anything from his mouth. I watched him closely whilst he was eating, but did not notice anything unusual.' – See too the Minute in Cabinet Office files, about a letter from Mr Manvell, Oct 4, 1963 (WO.32/19603).

22 book on the Gestapo: The actual book was Rupert Butler's *An Illustrated History of the Gestapo* (Ian Allan, London, 1992). Our thanks to Steve Kerr who noticed the graffiti. He could not recall the sergeant-major's name from memory in 2007 ('I asked the Librarian if it was possible to get a list of past borrowers.') CSM. Austin was the only other person in the room, said Dr Wells; not so, Whittaker recorded many others, no doubt among them the culprits who joined the affray.

24 A different and unknown hand: the crucial p.2 of Whittaker's war diary for May 1945 (WO.171/3969) was retyped on the same typewriter but by a typist other than the one who typed pages 1 and 3: this typist's p.2 used the figure 1 instead of letter l (el) for numbers, put no full-stop after initials, capitalised the unit name, wrote 'HIMMLER'S' on p.2 instead of 'HIMMLER's' as on p.3, and did not strike out the second and third lines of the printed title ('or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY') at the head of page 2. The other 1945 pages are ribbon-copies; but the three pages for May 1945 are carbon copies, and have been filed with the foot toward the spine, before the folder was transferred from War Office custody to the PRO. As altered, page 2 shows no entries between May 20 and May 23, the date of HH's death; if the real date of HH's arrest was on May 21 the omission may mask what was happening to him.

Chapter 2: Flawed

27 Christmas gift to Hitler: see Timothy W. Ryback, 'Hitler's Forgotten Library: The Man, His Books, and His Search for God,' in *The Atlantic Monthly*, New York, May 2003.

28 Speer's view: SHAEF interrog. of Albert Speer, 7th session, part 1, Jun 1,

1945 (PRO file WO.208/5205).

28 Germanic *Kultur:* Cf. Rudolf Brandt to *OSturmbannf.* Dr Philipp Freiherr von Luetzelburg, Jan 16, 1944, T175, roll 26, p.1803, Helmut Heiber, *Reichsführer! Briefe an und von Himmler* (DVA, Stuttgart, 1968), No. 292. Hereafter cited as: Heiber.

28 *Strahlgerät*: CX/MSS intercept AT.1235, Himmler to Oberg, Aug 24, 1944 (PRO file HW.19/276).

29 Himmler pilfered ideas: CSDIC report CMF/X166, Karl Wolff, conversations of May 15–17, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

29 Brandt: CCPWE#32 report DI-30, answers by Dr Karl Brandt, Jul 2, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/3154).

29 Gebhard Himmler was born in 1898. See the record of our interview with him and his wife Mathilde at Bernhard Borst Strasse, Munich, on Jun 26, 1971 (Institut für Zeitgeschichte file ZS-2257). Gebhard spoke to us kindly of HH, and saw him as going to his end 'upright, honest, and humble, and hardest of all toward himself.' See too his study 'Persönliche Charakteristik des ehemaligen Reichsführers SS Heinrich Himmler,' Jul 28, 1946.

29 husband was a policeman: The interview of Marga in Cine Città by UP writer Ann Stringer printed by *Il Giornale del Mattino*, Rome, July 4, 1945.

29 anguished diary: SS *Ogruf.* Maximilian von Herff, diary entries, May 18, 20, 21, 23, 1945. I am indebted to Barbara Farmer von Herff, for providing Herff's unpublished diary. Her father and Maximilian were cousins.

30 Woyrsch cannot understand: CSDIC(UK) report SRGG.1260(C), SS *Ogruf.* und Gen. d. Polizei von Woyrsch in conv. with Herff, May 26, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4170).

31 Lingner: CSDIC(UK) report SRM.1209, *Standartenführer* [Hans] Lingner, conv. of Feb 12, 1945 with a stoolpigeon (PRO file WO.208/4474).

31 Keitel: Karl-Heinz Keitel kindly provided to us his father's comments, as recorded by defence counsel Dr Dr Otto Nelte at Nuremberg in Sep 1946.

32 SS gangsters: Prof. Carl Burckhardt, quoted in a letter from Roger Makins, (UK Delegation to League of Nations) to William Strang, Jan 16, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/23005).

32 HH's present attitude: Minute by Frank Roberts (Central Office of the FO], Jan 13, 1939; see *e.g.* notes on Germany by a Correspondent of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), sent to FO, Dec 21, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/23005). – Further Minutes by Roberts, William Strang, Orme Sargent, and Ivone Kirkpatrick, Jan 19–24, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/23005).

32 Wolff: Gerd Heidemann, taped interview with Karl Wolff, visiting the Berghof site on Aug 28, 1978 (Heidemann Collection).

33 Backe letter: letter Herbert to Ursula Backe, Sep 4, 1936 (kindly provided

by her).

34 Hangstaengl: Ernst Hanfstaengel: Hitler: *The Missing Years* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957.)

34 penetrating gleam: 'Profile: Himmler,' in *The Observer*, London, Oct 18, 1942; US Third Army: 'Heinrich Himmler,' SCAVENGER Special Report No. 2, May 24, 1945, unnamed source was an SS officer who knew him intimately and saw him daily, 1940–45 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

34 Ramcke: CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.201(C), Ramcke, conv. of Sept 24–27, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4364).

34 Horcher: Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (1995), p.317; see the frequent references in Milch's diaries (DJ-59); and our interview of Skorzeny, at Otto Horcher's Madrid location in the 1970s.

35 Circle of Friends: Camp 020, Interrog. of Schellenberg, Jun 27–Jul 12, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/95); and see IMT Interrog. of Luitpold Schallermeier, May 7, 1947 by Mr Norbert G Barr.

36 Gmund villa (Lindenfycht): Josef Kiermaier, typescript Note, Westertimke, Aug 5, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474). In his CSDIC(UK) SIR.1586 Interrog., SS *Obersturmbannf.* Diether Lönholdt, 17th SS PzGr Div, Mar 30, 1945 (WO.208/3615) obligingly located HH's home for his British captors: 'It is situated on the shores of the Tegernsee at GSGS 4497/812/000133, lying back from the road on the Southern exit of the village of Gmund.' CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.318: Gen. Karl Bodenschatz in conv. with Schlieben and others Jun 14–19, 1945 was positive about Himmler. 'Among his family – they can't pin anything on him – he lived absolutely simply. He only had just an unpretentious apartment in Berlin, and anyone can go and look at his house on the Tegernsee.' (PRO file WO.208/4178).

36 Mathilde, wife of HH's older brother Gebhard: interview, Jun 26, 1971.

37 Tresckow: CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.213, Tresckow in conv. with Generalltn. Seyffardt and others, Oct 18–19, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4474, /4364).

37 black arsehole: CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.213(C), on Gen.Major von Wülfingen, Wahle, Konteradm. von Tresckow, and Gen.Ltn. Seyffardt (348. ID) in conversation, Oct 18–19, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4364, /5018).

38 Nicotine: Israeli 'Captain Lees': Pre-Trial Interrog. of Adolf Eichmann, Jun 10, 1960, at p.146 of 3,654 pp transcribed from 76 tapes; from the Heinrich Fraenkel papers, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque (cited hereafter as UNM). Bogged down in details, *ibid*., p.122.

38 Ley: CSDIC(UK) report SR Draft No. 8837, conv. between Hauptm. Kreutzberg and Fähnr. von Tirpitz, Sep 13, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4203).

38 Toni Lehner: Himmler to Anton Lehner (KZ Dachau) May 18, 1937: he would not be released until he gives up alcohol, as he had been committed

to KZ by the Führer for that purpose (NA film T175, roll 40, pp.0962 *et seq.*). – And see SR draft No. WG.449/45, conv. of Gefreiter Pfaffenberger, Feb 28, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4200). SS *Sturmbannf.* Artur Rödl was the first *Lagerführer* (commandant) of Buchenwald, 1938–43, a ruddy-faced ex-blacksmith with a bow-legged, rolling gait: and see CSDIC(UK) report SIR.1393, Gefreiter Pfaffenberger, Jan 14, 1945 (WO.208/3611).

39 Himmler's daily routine: Josef Kiermaier, typescript Note, Westertimke, Aug 5, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

39 strictures on speeding: CSDIC(UK) report SRM.901. *Oberstltn.* Dr Ing Schulz, Kommandant Gross Paris, capt. Paris, Aug 25, 1944, speaking on Sep 16, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4139). – And CSDIC(UK) report SRM.387, conv. of an SS Oberscharf. of 5. Flakkomp., Nov 18, 1943 with an Oberfeldwebel of 334 Div (PRO file WO.208/4474): 'Wenn da einer schnell fährt, da ist er [Himmler] besonders spitz darauf.'

40 highly decorated: CSDIC(UK) report GRGG225, SS *Oberf.* Kurt Meyer speaking with Eberding, Nov 18–19, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4474, /4364); and GRGG.236, conv. with Eberding, Dec 19-21, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/5018). Meyer commanded 12th SS Panzer, "Hitler Jugend."

41 glutton for work: CSDIC(UK) report SRM.1062, Maj. Zorn, cdr. 3 Bn, 37 SS Regt, 17 SS Div, captured near Metz, Nov 10, 1944, in conv. with Oberst Lex (HAR 170) on Nov 24, 1944 (PRO file WO208/4139).

41 tone-deaf: Interrog. of SS Oberf. Eugen Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57 (PRO file WO.208/4474); and SHAEF interrog. of Albert Speer, 7th session, part 1, Jun 1, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/5205).

41 Aminoff related the episode to Sir Victor Mallet who reported it to Lord Halifax, from Stockholm, Dec 6, 1940 (PRO file FO.371/26508).

41 relationship with his wife: Interrog. of SS *Oberf.* Eugen Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

42 laying down rules: Himmler to the SS *Amt*, Munich, Oct 25, 1934 (in private hands).

42 snipers: SHAEF daily digest No. 251, Feb 12, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

42 Thilde: Mathilde Hinterreicher, a workman's widow, served the Himmler family for twenty-one years; lived after the war in Waakirchener Strasse 33 in the Munich suburb, Thalkirchen. Gebhard Himmler memoir, Jul 28, 1946; and Gerd Heidemann, taped interview with Wolff, at the Berghof site on Aug 28, 1978 (Heidemann Collection).

Chapter 3: A Witch in the Family

44 Diary No. '1': Himmler diary, Aug 23, 1914 – Sep 26, 1915. The original

diaries are in the safe of the Hoover Library, Stanford, California (hereafter: HL), filmed on five rolls. Reels 4–5 have positive and negative film of Himmler's diary Sep 23, 1914 to Jul 6, 1922; and Feb 11–25, 1924. HL, NSDAP, misc records, 1923–1944. 3 MS boxes, 1 tape, 3 flags. Includes activities of Himmler, speeches by Hitler, Goebbels, Ley, and Himmler: The photocopies in boxes 1–2 correspond to the listing for Reel B in Grete Heinz and Agnes F Peterson, *NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Guide to the Hoover Institution Microfilm Collection* (1964). See Werner T Angress and Bradley F Smith: 'Diaries of Heinrich Himmler's Early Years,' in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. xxxi, No. 3, Sept. 1959, pp.206–224; copy in IWM, file AL.2689.

44 Angress and Smith *op. cit.* See too the study by psychoanalyst Peter-Loewenberg, typescript, 'The Unsuccessful Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler' (HL), published also in *American Historical Review*, 1971, 76 (3), pp.612–41, and the (slightly inaccurate) transcript by Helmut Bertrams of the diaries for Nov 18, 1919 – Jul 5, 1922.

45 sold to the Hoover: Sworakowski (Hoover Inst.) to Friedrichsen, Mar 28,1960 (HL, Himmler corresp. file): the diaries were 'purchased in California two years ago.'

45 HH's brown leather-bound 1935 diary was acquired by R C Schneider of Florida. In October 2010 it was again sold, for $6,500, in Stamford, Connecticut: www.alexautographs.com.

45 autograph hunter: James E Townsend, of Houston. After he died we donated copies to the 'Holocaust' Memorial Museum in Los Angeles and to the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv, hereafter: BA).

45 Prof. Michael Wildt: see *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* No. 4, 2004.

45 Rosenthal: In 1983 the late Judith Moses, New York, an award-winning producer of television documentaries and human rights activist, investigated this background fully for ABC News, who did not however use the material. *See below*, our note to p.169.

46 the witch in the family line: Heydrich to HH, May 23, 1939: BDC file 240/I; it has the rubber-stamp classification GEHEIM PERSÖNLICH, otherwise not found in archives. The Passaquay line was traced in his mother's line back to Claudius Passaquay, born around 1625; the discovery was made by witch-researcher SS *Untersturmf.* Wilhelm Patin, former Canon at St. Kajetan's in Munich, and relative of HH's Uncle Karl Patin. For his *Sonderauftrag Hexenforschung,* see Sönke Lorenz *et al.*, *Himmlers Hexenkartothek* (Bielefeld, 1999).

47 parchment roll. Photographed for us by Maj. Charles E Snyder, Jr., of Maryland. It records HH's parents as *Geheimer Studienrat* Joseph Gebhard Himmler, b. May 17, 1665 [which should read 1865], d. Munich Oct 2,

1936; and Anna Maria Auguste Heyder, b. Munich Jan 19, 1866. – Anna died aged 76 on Sep 10, 1941. Her three sons Heinrich (Reichsführer SS), Gebhard (*OSturmbannf.* and *Ministerialrat*) and Ernst (*Sturmbannführer*, *Oberingenieur*), signed the death notice in the SS newspaper *Schwarzes Korps*, Sep 25, 1941. – Review of the Foreign Press No. 107, Oct 13, 1941 (in PRO file WO.208/4474). Other family data from a typed summary, 'Die Verwandtschaft zwischen dem Reichsführer SS und Frau Maria Himmler, München, Liebherrstr. 1/4' (HL).

48 Wittelsbach. Otto von Wittelsbach was king from 1886 until his death in 1916, but after he was declared insane his duties were performed by two regents, his cousins Luitpold and then Ludwig. According to Karl Wolff, writing in 1952 (ZS-317), HH's grandfather the gendarme was illegitimate and possibly Jewish – which being from Wolff should be treated with caution.

48 prostrate at the feet: the correspondence is in the Himmler file of the NSDAP Hauptarchiv, in HL.

48 school in Passau: HH's father was *Königl. Gymnasialprofessor am Humanistischen Gymnasium*, now the Gymnasium Leopoldinum, in Passau. As a philologist, he was an authority on Agidius Albertinus (1560–1620), the Dutch-born translator, philosopher and supporter of mediæval witch burnings; see his 50pp. essay, 'Zur Sprache des Agidius Albertinus,' in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Münchener Literatur- und Drucksprache am Beginne des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Passau, 1903: Programm für das Schuljahr 1902/1903.

48 George Wolfgang Felix Hallgarten (1901–1975). Hallgarten was born in Munich Jan 3, 1901, to Robert Hallgarten (1870–1924) and his pacifist and feminist wife Constanze (1881–1969). His papers are in HL: see Box 4 for the garden-party invitation. For some years after its 1950s composition, Hallgarten's memoir was not published as publishers 'feared it would make the monster look too harmless.' It finally appeared in *Germania Judaica*, Nr 2, 1960–61, in Apr 1960. He adds more detail in his memoirs, *Als die Schatten fielen* (Ullstein, Berlin 1969). – Box 25: 'Heinrich Himmler's Childhood: Comments by an Eyewitness,' ?1969, written as an angry riposte to Peter Loewenberg's 'uninformed' article; and 'Mein Mitschüler Himmler,' in *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, Oct 14–15, 1961, reproduced from *Germania Judaica*. – Box 26: Letter dated Dec 20, 1959 to the *Journal of Modern History*, Jun 1960, vol. xxxii, p.212. Information about Himmler. – Box 27: 'That Monster Was My Classmate: The Strange Transformation of Little Heinrich Himmler into Hitler's #1 Henchman,' ?1954. There are harmless anachronisms in this account: he describes their friendship with Falk Zipperer: Z. was surely at Landshut, not the Wilhelms Gymnasium. Recalling that HH had mocked the French and eagerly anticipated war

with their hated neighbour, Hallgarten writes about exchanging scandal over their lunchboxes in the schoolyard; HH particularly relishing the spectacle of minister's wife Madame Henriette Caillaux going on trial for murdering *Figaro* journalist Gaston Calmette in the newspaper offices for slandering herself. The shooting was on Mar 16, 1914 - six months *after* HH left Munich for Landshut.

49 if not HH's actual class: From the third year on, several children became *Edelknaben*, wrote Hallgarten, which he found distasteful. There was von Rottberg, who was rough and healthy; the rather more suave Baron Voit von Voitenberg, the bookish von Staudt, and Count Zeppelin, a nephew of the airship builder, who was good at French, the language of court – otherwise an ignoramus, but still propelled upwards by unseen hands. Hallgarten's views were disputed as 'ungenügend und entstellt' by Otto Frhr. von Waldenfels, retired *Staatsarchivdirektor*, one of the *Edelknaben* concerned. Hallgarten chronicled the careers of 590 such boy-pages in *Die Edelknaben der kurfürstlichen und königlichen bayerischen Pagerie von* 1799–1918 (Munich, 1959). He pointed out that HH left this school for Landshut while in Class III, while boys could enter the *Pagerie* only after completing Class IV; so HH would not have encountered any in his class. — MS, 'Legendenbildung um Himmler,' in Fraenkel papers (UNM).

In MS, 'That Monster was my Classmate,' Hallgarten recites the class list – Allwein, Badhauser, Bigler, Blab, Doell, Eder, Esslinger, Forster, Früwald, Hagel, Hahn, Hallgarten, Himmler, Listl, Laschke, …

50 brothers: According to BDC files, Gebhard Himmler had NSDAP Party No. 1,117,822 and SS No. 214,049, rising to a *Standartenführer* (Col.) in the reserve on Jan 30, 1944. In the SS List (*Dienstaltersliste*) for 1944 he is styled Professor, reflecting his position as 'technical advisor on education' in the *Führungshauptamt*. Ernst Hermann Himmler had Party No. 676,777 and SS No. 132,099, rising to a *Sturmbannführer* (Major) on Jan 30, 1944. Both brothers were on the staff of the SS *Hauptamt* in 1938; Gebhard was still there in 1944, while Ernst was by then chief of *Fernmeldewesen* (telecommunications).

50 Katrin Himmler wrote that Ernst, her grandfather born in 1905, was 'the spoilt baby' of the family and married his wife Paula during the war. Her dislike of HH, her great-uncle, is evident: 'It was only the pictures of Heinrich that had aroused a feeling of disgust in me every time I saw them.' She never met either, and her memoirs should be mistrusted.

50 death of Ernst Himmler: In September 1948 a former chief engineer of Berlin Radio told Ernst's widow Paula that he was last seen on the evening of April 30 or May 1, 1945 in the courtyard. A few years later, an unnamed man told them that Ernst had swallowed poison.

50 on Gebhard Himmler, junior: Willi Frischauer, *Himmler, the Evil Genius of the Third Reich* (London, 1953), p.18. – See too 21 AGp DIC/D/CI/18, Report on Gebhard Himmler, issued by Det. CSDIC(UK) Jun 12, 1945 (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR, Investigative Records Repository [the CIC files], personal name files, box 85, XE 000632: Himmler dossier). Gebhard Himmler Jr. married Mathilde Wendler, and fathered three children – Imgard (b. 1927), Anneliese (b. 1930) and Heide (b. 1940).

50 Trinity Square Building: See Alfson Beckenbauer, 'Musterschüler und Massenmörder. Heinrich Himmlers Landshuter Jugendjahre,' in *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für Niederbayern,* Bd. 95, 1969, pp.96ff.; and Werner Ebermeier, *Die Geschichte des Hans-Carossa-Gymnasiums in Landshut 1629–2004*, where Gebhard and Heinrich Himmler are discreetly mentioned.

51 the Bavarian Gen. in CSDIC(UK) report SRGG.962, was Gen. d. Pz Tr Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma: in conv. with others, Jul 21, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4168).

51 Dr Karl Gebhardt was born in Munich Nov 23, 1897. See his testimony in Case I, the 'Doctors' Trial,' transcript, p.3991; and see CSDIC(UK) GRGG 338(C), conv. between SS Ogruf. Woyrsch and Herff (PRO file WO.208/4178 and Trevor-Roper Papers [hereafter TRP], 1370ff); and SRGG 1259(C); interrog. on Sep 1, 1946 by Fred Rodell, Woyrsch referred to the 'negative influence' of Gebhardt and Wolff on Himmler (ZS-1395). Gebhardt was hanged by the Americans on Jun 2, 1948.

51 Zipperer: later SS HStuf d. Res Dr Falk W. Zipperer, born Dec 24, 1899, SS No. 309 495. As an expert on legal history, he wrote a book on mediæval lynch law: *Das Haberfeldtreiben. Seine Geschichte und seine Deutung.* This was practised in Bavaria until well into the Nineteenth Century; the study was published by Böhlau of Weimar in 1938, in a series on Indo-German Law. Zipperer dedicated the presentation copy, bound in vellum, to HH. He was transferred as of Jan 20, 1945 from HH's personal staff to the SS *Hauptamt*. See Chef SS-Hauptamt sgd. Berger, Tagesbefehl Nr 08/45 v 24.3.45, on http://forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?t=122500.

52 Tittmoning: diary, Jul 28, 1915.

52 Fascinated by the war news: Himmler diaries, Aug 23 – Oct 28, 1914; Angress, p.207. HL has six of these original black notebooks, on microfilm DD.247.H4.A3. See the correspondence on the fate of the diaries, on which we now know more, in PRO file CAB.146/394.

52 war outbreak in WW1: HH diary, Aug 23, 1914 – Oct 29, 1914 then Feb 1 to 24, July 28 to Sep 26, 1915, with some entries for 1916 in shorthand. 'Tgb. 1, September 1914, Tagebuch für Himmler Heinrich.'

52 received into the Catholic church: the certificate was auctioned for £40,000

in 2011. According to the *Daily Mail*, Nov 15, 2011, it 'belonged' to an American woman whose father Lieut. Richard J Willis had been tasked with remodelling HH's Tegernsee home into a senior U.S. officers' club after World War Two.

53 artistically gifted: Gebhard Himmler was gregarious and an accomplished water colourist. He sent us a handpainted card each Christmas for several years in the 1970s. He and HH both played the piano: HH, see *e.g.* diary, Aug 23–24, 1914; Gebhard himself: *ibid*., Nov 4, Dec 24, 1919; Jun 4, 1922.

54 Wurmsee. Prof. Wurmsee was brother-in-law of Prof. Otto Maußer, a colleague of HH's father on the *Wörterbuchkommission*, 1912–1913, and researcher on runes and Nordic myths – see *Die Ura Linda Chronik*, published in 1933, Ahnenerbe BA file NS 21/563.

57 letters of HH's father to the *Hofmarschall* of Prince Heinrich asking for his son's admission as an officer candidate. HH's letters to his parents from Regensburg, 1917–1918, some in Gabelsberger shorthand, are in folder 2, HL film No. 98.

57 the Geometry homework book 1916 is now possessed by Don Boyle, of Taylor, Pennsylvania. Sample of the homework on October 26, 1916: 'Am [*sic*] die Scheitel der spitzen Winkel eines rechtwinkligen Dreiecks mit der Hypotenuse a und den Winkeln 30° und 60° werden Kreise gezogen, die die Katheten als Radien haben. Man berechne die zwischen den Kreisbögen liegende Fläche!' (The *Kathete* is the short side of a rectangular triangle). – HH's writing barely changed throughout his life.

57 mother's fifty-second: Referred to two years later in diary, Jan 19, 1920 –'Mummy's birthday today.' He used the fond diminutive *Mutterle*, which rather discounts Peter Loewenberg's theory that HH displayed distance from her.

58 Army letter-forms. HH to his father, then Herrn *Konrektor* Gebhard Himmler, Landshut, Dec 6 and 10, 1918: in HL.

58 Klassenschreiber: The notebook is in NSDAP HA, roll 17A, file 1. It shows the class studying Homer's *Iliad*, Plato's dialogue of Socrates with Crito, Sophocles's tragedy, *Antigone*; and in German the works of Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, and *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare.

58 Soldiers' Council: alleged in CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.257, Feb 11, 1945: 'Himmler's past,' by Gen.Maj. Franz Vaterrodt (b. in Diedenhofen on on Apr 29, 1890, last Wehrmacht commandant of Strasbourg) speaking to Oberst Reimann (PzGren Regt 86) in conv. Feb 6–10, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4177). Even Sepp Dietrich had been chairman of the Soldiers' Council of the *Sturmpanzerkampfwagen-Abteilung* 13.

59 he had seen active service: 'Heinrich Himmler,' leader in *H.K. Banner,* Mannheim, Aug 25, 1943 (in PRO file WO.208/4474). – Memo, 'Heinrich

Himmler.' The author of this memo was Brian Melland, head of the Cabinet Office enemy documents section EDS (MI.14d). He compiled this 150pp. dossier on the Reichsführer until April 1964; it contains a useful brief note on 'Himmler, The Policeman,' Feb 19, 1964 (AL.2689). Among the sources he used were SHAEF/EDS/G/10, Report on the German Police; the works of Frischauer, Diels, Crankshaw, Reitlinger, d'Alquèn, Konrad Heiden; and HH's early diaries.

59 comrade from the Oberländer Company: Lieut. Echsle. See diary, Jun 21, 1922.

59 famous trial counsel: RA Dr Otto Gritschneder (†Mar 4, 2005), obituary in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and in the Munich Juristische Gesellschaft, *Mitteilungen*, II/2005, p.20. For more on HH's days at the Wilhelm *Gymnasium*, see our note to p.47: Wolfgang Hallgarten, 'Mein Mitschüler Heinrich Himmler. Eine Jugenderinnerung,' Germania-Judaica. *Bulletin der Kölner Bibliothek zur Geschichte des deutschen Judentums*, No. 2, Apr 1960.

59 Quince Face, *Quittengesicht*: Recalled by Otto Löhner, a pupil at the Wittelsbach Gymnasium; quoted in *Spiegel*, No. 34/1980, p.167.

Chapter 4: Gaudeamus Igitur

61 Citing Charles W Socarides MD, *The Overt Homosexual* (New York, 1968), p.43, Peter Loewenberg, *op. cit.*, fol. 25, identifies HH's admiration for princely and clerical mediæval power as evidence of a perversion: 'He is behaving like a passive homosexual son to a brutal or aggressive father.' If still alive, probably both father and son would have had grounds to bring suit in defamation for slurs written on such tenuous evidence.

61 Uncle Karl Patin: diary, Oct 1919. The Bavarian Regent Prinz Luitpold, 'haben sich allergnädigst bewogen gefunden' to post him to St Walburg's from his living as a priest in Obereschenbach on the last day of 1894. See *Ministerialblatt für Kirchen- und Schulangelegenheiten im Königreich Bayern*, Jan 9, 1895. Pamphlet, vol. 31 published by the Theosophical Society of Madras, India.

62 Bavarian turmoil: Anton von Padua Alfred Emil Hubert Georg Graf von Arco auf Valley (Feb 5, 1897 – Jun 29, 1945), a name fortunately abbreviated to Anton Arco-Valley, had been a student at Munich University. The theory is that he had killed Eisner to prove himself worthy of membership of the Thule Society, which had rejected his application because he was Jewish – his mother coming from the Oppenheim clan.

63 Leviné was said to be the inspiration for the American, Whittaker Chambers.

63 *Inmatrikulations-Bescheinigung,* etc., are in his file in HL, NSDAP Hauptarchiv.

64 HH's letter to mother, Nov 6, 1919: The letter was sold for $1,410 by California auctioneers Bonhams in Nov 2004.

64 Louisa Hager. The same letter log records her living at Kochstrasse 18/II in Munich. She wrote to HH fourteen letters 1912–16, he wrote her ten 1915–16.

65 Mariele Zahler. HH's letter log (HL: NSDAP HA roll 99, file 1) records her living in Rosenheim and Munich, writing him thirteen letters 1919–1921; with a fourteenth dated Oct 2, 1924 recording probably that death. HH recorded similar numbers to and from her brother Ludwig Zahler, his best friend, who also died young (in his thirties).

65 resorted to tears: diary, Oct 20, 1919. Psychiatrist Peter Loewenberg, *op.cit*., fol. 18, makes much of this. 'It is a reaction formation to underlying sadistic impulses which is expressed by the beauty found in watching a girl cry. Heinrich's sadistic excitement breaks through his defenses at this point. We can witness his arousal' – if we so choose. Other psychiatrists may well understand this language, and agree. Loewenberg's study was highly praised – by his peers.

65 because it is my duty: The ineffable Loewenberg comments here: 'We note that the nationalism of *Drang nach Osten* is here associated with work and self-discipline which serves the purpose of controlling anxciety, as well as to achieve his yearning for an ideal of Germanic feminine purity. Sexuality is fused with aggression in the name of German womanhood using the tritest clichés of his culture. Being married and staying in Germany was impossible. It is as though the beloved homeland was an incestuous sexual object (Mother). He could not be sexual and be in Germany. To have a sexual relationship with a woman near to home would remind him too much of his mother.'

66 hypnotist: diary, Nov 13, 1919. For psychiatrist Loewenberg, 'The control was a protection against his [HH's] homosexual panic,' and he writes (*op. cit*., fol. 27) that HH's 'arousal on seeing the girl helpless' is again 'the breakthrough of Heinrich's underlying hate, aggression, sadism, and his masochistic identification with the passive female.'

68 The Munich Apollo fraternity: *Festschrift zur Hundertjahrfeier 1865–1965* (München 1965), p.160 (Mitgliederverzeichnis – 2. Die Toten 1940–1965) which lists Heinrich Himmler. The Apollo was associated with the Rothenburger Verband Schwarzer Verbindungen (RVSV).

68 Canon law: see the readers' letters in *The New York Times*, Apr 2 and 22, 1922 on this. By duelling, HH would also incur 'legal infamy' under Canon 2294 and could never perform ecclesiastical functions.

68 Albert Ludwig Daiber, *Elf Jahre Freimaurer* (Stuttgart, Walter Hädecke Verlag, 1905); and Dr Friedrich Wichtl, *Weltfreimaurerei, Weltrevolu-*

tion, Weltrepublik (Munich, 1920). – See Reinhard Markner, 'Blaming the Great War on a Freemasons' Entente: Friedrich Wichtl, 1872–1921,' a paper delivered Oct 30, 2010 in London at the Twelfth Canonbury Conference.

68 dispensation: this is referenced in HH's diary on Mar 2, 1922, when term ended: 'Mußte ein Glas Bier aussaufen. Hugo der neue Senior wußte nicht, daß ich Bierdispens hatte. . . Das Bier etwas im Kopf gemerkt.' With the consequence, 'entsetzlichen Magen' (Mar 3).

5: Young Man with a Jovial Grin

70 letters home: HL, Himmler papers, box 15: Correspondence, Feb 1921 – Sep 1923, negative photostats.

73 Rehrl farm: diary, Mar 24, 1922; Alois Rehrl, Testimonial for HH, Fridolfing, Aug 31, 1921 (HL).

74 if things had gone differently: Karl Wolff in conv. with Gerd Heidemann at the Berghof, Aug 28, 1978.

77 tractor works: Testimonial for HH, sgd. Werzinger, Vereinigte Fabriken Landwirtschaftlicher Maschinen, previously Epple & Buxbaum, Ingolstadt, Oct 15, 1921 (HL).

77 gymnastics: see HH's letter to his mother, Jun 24, 1921.

77 Gebhard's paintings: diary, Nov 12, 1921: 'To Tietz's. Cash for two paintings by Gebhard sold.' Dec 7, 1921: 'Mr Zitzmann has brought over a packet from Ingolstadt. Letters, and took Gebhard's pictures over to Tietz to sell.' Feb 11, 1922: 'Over to Tietz's, sold them one picture by Gebhard.'

77 Gebhard and Paula: diary Nov 7, 12, 26, 1921. Agnes Günther's *Die Heilige und Ihr Narr* was first published in 1913.

79 animal breeding field-trip: for psychiatrist Peter Loewenberg, *op. cit*., MS fol. 22, Himmler's 'interest in animal husbandry suggests an erotic displacement onto caring for and fondling "beasts," and a possible voyeuristic pleasure in watching them copulate.' This tells us more perhaps about psychiatrists than about HH.

80 likes church architecture: see also diary, Feb 12, 1922: 'Read a leaflet. Ten-thirty over to St Michael's, a wonderful church in which I feel so much at peace. It reminds me of the cathedral in Passau.'

81 Pastor Wilhelm August Patin: on Jul 4, 1908 he was awarded a degree in theology at the imperial Karl Ferdinand University in Prague, and appointed the same day as *Hofstiftsvikar* in Munich; he taught religion at the Wilhelms *Gymnasium* from 1915 to 1921. See HH diary, Jun 1, 1922: 'Gerade wie wir beim Thee saßen, kam Willi Patin, der mich besuchen wollte, ziemlich klein und gedrückt, er ist halt ein unglücklicher und aber so sensibler heißblütiger Mensch,' and Jun 8: 'Willi u. Onkel August Patin getroffen.'

81 Princess Theresa was not well off: diary, Feb 22, 1922. On Nov 24, 1921 HH had visited Frau Kornberger again: 'People are as hard and uncharitable as they can be,' he wrote in his diary Nov 24, 1921: 'The Princess visits her and does not see her plight. . . I fetched rolls for her and added a small cake, which I laid down without her noticing it. If only I could do more, but we are poor devils ourselves.' Loewenberg adduces this, *op. cit*., MS fol. 19 as further evidence of HH's callous sadism.

82 *Pandora's Box*: diary, Nov 1, 1921.

Chapter 6: That's How They Are

83 Turkey, Peru: diary Nov 19–20, 23, 1921; Georgia: Jan 2, 1922. And see diary, Feb 12, 1924: 'In die T.H. mit einem Deutsch-Kaukasier, einem Herrn vom Verein Deutscher Studenten um 10 h. Mit ihm erkundigt, wie die Verhältnisse bei ihnen in Kaukasien sind. – Bolschewistenherrschaft. Landaufteilung. Nichts zu machen.'

84 Fasching: diary, Feb 5, 1922.

84 one should buy the cow: diary, Dec , 1921.

85 Prof. Max von Gruber (1853–1927) was from Oct 1902 to 1923 director of the Institute of Hygiene in Munich and author, *Hygiene des Geschlechtslebens* (Stuttgart, 1903). The quotation is to be found on p.85 of the later editions *e.g.*, Stuttgart 1927: 'Wohl niemals würden zwei Menschen auf die Dauer ertragen, so eng wie Eheleute aneinander gekettet zu sein, wenn sie nicht dabei die Befriedigung ihres Geschlechtstriebes suchen und finden würden.' – Information kindly provided to us on Dec 1, 2010 by Prof. Dr Heinz Klamm, Gruber's successor as director of the Vienna institute.

84 rescuing the waitress. Freud stated that the fantasy of rescuing girls and women 'is derived from a fixation of infantile feelings of tenderness for the mother.' Cited by Loewenberg, *op. cit*., MS fol. 33.

85 showdown with Lou Zahler, and manipulative women: diary, Dec 7, 1921.

86 talk too much: diary, Nov 18, 22, 1921. The other entries quoted are Nov 4, 13, 24, Dec 1, 4, 2, 1921; Jan 28, 1944.

87 money power and adultery: diary, Feb 4, 14, 25 and 28, 1922.

86 HH will manage: diary, Jan 18, 1922.

87 Gustav Adolf Joachim Rüdiger, Graf von der Goltz (December 8, 1865 – November 4, 1946): HH's diary, Nov 21, 1921.

88 Paasche: diary Nov 22, 29, 1921. Hans Paasche on life in the Foreign Legion. *Fremdenlegionär Kirsch*, in two parts: 1. Eine abenteuerliche Fahrt von Kamerun in den deutschen Schützengraben in den Kriegsjahren 1914/15 (Berlin: Scherl [ca. 1916]). 2. Zum Tode verurteilt. Neues vom Fremdenle-

gionär Kirsch (Berlin: Scherl {ca.1920]).

87 *Völkerkunde*: Georg Hermann Theodor Buschan, *Illustrierte Völkerkunde*, in 2 vols. Volume: 1 (publ. by Strecker & Schröder, Stuttgart 1922). Diary, Jan 26, 28, 1922.

88 divinely blue: statement by SS *Gruf* Karl Schreyer, Verwaltungschef der OSAF (IfZ, ZS-0357).

88 how puny: diary, Nov 30, 1921.

88 Dr Quenstedt: diary, Dec 6, 1921.

88 military music and parades: diary, Jan 29 and Feb 26, 1922.

91 Dr Oskar Gerstle, b. Munich, Sep 4, 1893. His final destination was possibly Bełżec; he was transported to the Piaski transit ghetto with other Bavarian Jews. Gerstle was known as 'ein tüchtiger, gewissenhafter Anwalt von tadelloser Haltung und vornehmer Denkungsart'. Deportation: BA Berlin R 222 pers. 57204. See Reinhard Weber, *Das Schicksal der jüdischen Rechtsanwälte in Bayern nach 1933*: published by Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Justiz (Oldenbourg Verlag, Munich, 2006), pp.87–88. For a photo of Gerstle, see Simone Ladwig-Winters, *Anwalt ohne Recht: Schicksale jüdischer Anwälte in Deutschland nach 1933*. HH's biographers Peter Padfield and Peter Longerich both fail to tell readers of Gerstle's sad fate.

Chapter 7: Good and Bad People Everywhere

92 functioning as a mole: see Thomas Weber, *Hitler's First War* (OUP, 2010).

92 poison of anti-Semitism: see *e.g.* Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

92 National Socialist German Workers Party launched Feb 20, 1920: Of the Platzl, home to the Hofbräuhaus, HH wrote in his diary, Dec 5, 1921: 'The Platzl is altogether very nationalist and in its own comical way probably achieves quite a lot,' though whether he was referring to it as the seat of half a dozen duelling corps, or the famous satirical theatre of that name or the Hofbräuhaus is not clear. The theatre's best-known artist was the sharp-tongued Bavarian comedian 'Weiss Ferdl' (Ferdinand Weisheitinger); much beloved, he suggested in one 1943 broadcast that each warring country might go bomb its own cities, that would save on the aviation fuel.

93 police reports of these earliest Hitler speeches, 1919 and 1920, are in BA file NS.11/28; he spoke in Vienna in Dec 1921 and Jun 1922: see the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (hereafter: *VfZ*), 1966, pp.207f.

93 blamed the Jews: Police reports, *VfZ*, 1963, pp.274ff.

94 bacillus. Hitler used the analogy often. Winston Churchill used it also, writing in *The World Crisis* that the Germans in Oct 1917 'transported Lenin in a sealed truck like a plague bacillus from Switzerland into Russia.'

95 the Hitler dossier: The retired civil servant compiling the dossier was Konrad Pracher, b. Graz on Nov 22, 1872. HH's two-page report is classified *Geheime Reichssache*. 'Betrifft: Angebliche Verwandtschaft des Führers.' We found it in the Seeley Mudd Libr., Princeton University. US private Eric Hamm had looted it from Hitler's Munich residence in 1945. For other materials, see Werner Maser, *Die Frühgeschichte der NSDAP* (Bonn, 1965), and our *Hitler's War*, 1991, p.xxiii. German 'newspapers were repeatedly, *e.g.* on December 16, 1939, forbidden to speculate on his ancestry.'

96 Aloisia Voigt: see *The Daily Telegraph*, Jan 19, 2005: 'Hitler's mentally ill cousin "killed in Nazi gas chamber".' She is identified there only as Aloisia V. Her file is still at the Vienna institution. In one letter she pleaded for poison to kill herself. 'I'm sure it would require only a small amount to free me from my appalling torture,' she wrote.

96 hospital in Schwabing: HH diary, Jan 15, and see Jan 21, 1922.

96 *The Iris of India*: Hermann Sudermann, *Die Indische Lilie* (1911): in this story, a wealthy retired officer and bachelor has Indian lilies sent to each of his conquests. The story's ending is ambivalent, but readers are invited to believe he commits suicide after an unhappy affair. Ludwig Lewisohn also translated the collection of short stories into English as *The Indian Lily, and other stories* (London, John Lane; New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1911).

97 enthusiasm for the Apollo: diary, Feb 10, 1922.

97 *Reinigungspartie*, rehabilitation bout: diary, Jan 22, 1922.

97 hopes of a *Mensur* bout dashed: diary, Feb 13, 22 and 26, 1922.

97 bad stomach: diary, Mar 2 and 3, 1922.

97 Gruber's treatise was actually a short compendium, numbering some 140 pp. There was an 'authorised translation' into English, *Hygiene of Sex* (London, Tindall & Cox; Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company), 1926. See too Fridolf Kudlien, 'Max von Gruber und die frühe Hitlerbewegung,' in *Medizinhistorisches Journal*, 17 (1982), pp. 373-389.

98 liked her mother: diary, Feb 18, 1922.

98 the tender evening: diary, Feb 18, 1922.

98 the odd mood: diary, Feb 25, 1922.

98 the professor's wife: diary, Feb 27, 1922.

98 HH's letter to his father, Feb 1, 1922.

98 everything is soaring: letter, Feb 20, 1922.

99 books from Lehmann Verlag: diary, Feb 11, 12, 1922. Georg Günther Forstner: *Karthagos Untergang. Eine Warnung für Deutschland*; Paul Tafel, *Parlamentarismus und Volksvertretung*; Houston Stewart Chamberlain: *Rasse und Nation*, München: Lehmann, 1921.

100 Gebhard's room: HH's letters to his mother, Mar 3, 10, 1922.

100 Blüher: diary, Mar, 1922. Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, 2 vols., Jena, 1917–1919. Blüher was prominent in the taboo-breaking *Wandervogel* ('Bird of Migration') movement for youngsters, and as the high priest of back-to-nature homosexuality in Germany.

101 the doctor and his wife: diary, May 27, 1922. HH had been invited to spend the weekend with Dr Hugo Höfl and his family in the 14th century hamlet of Apfeldorf, near Landsberg. On May 28 he obliged his hosts to join him at Church – 'the teacher screws around, even though he's married, and Friedl [Mrs Höfl] the bitch [*Luder*] really turns him on.' Teasing her for drunkenly oversleeping, HH terms her next day a *Bierleiche* – beer corpse.

101 Fiffi Orla: diary, Mar 6 and Jun 7, 1922. Peter Loewenberg (*op. cit.*, MS fol. 31) concludes that 'Heinrich's view of woman was split between a pure virginal and innocent maternal image, and a dangerously uncontrolled sexual and aggressive creature who ensnares men with her lust.'

101 little Irmgard Höfl: diary, May 26; doctor's wife, May 27, 1922.

102 Glass Palace: diary, 1919, and Jun 9, 1922.

102 weird mentality: HH's order is 'Befehl über die Vernehmung von Frauen,' Mar 28, 1942 (USHMM Reel 1).

102 *Mistbienen*: Statements by Eduardo Schmid, Oct 26, and by Josef Rummel, Oct 2, 1945 (PRO WO.208/4661, the Aumeier dossier). Kurt Heinrich, Oct 27, 1945 (*ibid.*) also knew of the *Mistbiene* affair, 'den er [Aumeier] einmal bei einem Beisammensein erzählte.' For a woman's recollection of the same scene, see Irmtraud Heike, 'Johanna Langefeld. Die Biografie einer KZ-Oberaufseherin,' in *Werkstatt Geschichte*, 12, (Hamburg 1995), pp.7–19. Viola Schubert-Lehnhardt refers to this episode in 'Frauen als Täterinnen im Nationalsozialismus: Protokollband der Fachtagung am 17. und 18. September 2004 in Bernburg' (2005) on p.74. – Hans Aumeier married Berta Schmid, Apr 25, 1931, and had one daughter, b. 1932; their family home was near Munich 1944 (information from Natalia Perrin).

Chapter 8: The Duel

103 picked *Frauenschuh*, Lady's Slipper: diary, May 28, 1922. – These May and June 1922 diary passages about his parents are seen by some as important. Psychoanalyst Peter Loewenberg (MS, *op. cit.*, fols. 38–39) sees in them evidence of HH's repressed rage towards his father: 'The account is always of the bad mood and acrimony of [his] father.' In that special universe occupied by such experts, any warmth and tender feelings 'were unconsciously associated with incestuous œdipal wishes toward his mother. This brought forth intense castration anxiety which tended to color any

emotions not under "iron" discipline.' Loewenberg also divines passive homosexual longings in HH toward his father: *ibid*. fol. 45.

104 father irascible: diary, May 29, 1922. Augustiner: *ibid*., May 30, 1922.

104 lieutenant, Lieut. Reithel: diary, Jun 11, 1922.

104 uncle Ernst Fischer: diary, Jun 3 and 6, 1922.

105 *die schwarze Schmach*: diary, Jun 14, 1922. In 1920 the anti-colonial British journalist Edmund Dene Morel (1873–1924, b. Georges Eduard Pierre Achille Morel de Ville) had first exposed this 'Black Plague' in the press. On the earlier ban, see Alfred Rosenberg, *VB*, May 31, 1922, referring to the Zirkus Krone as 'the same circus where it is forbidden to protest at the Black Outrage.'

105 *Leipziger Zeitung*, article 'Die farbigen Truppen im Rheinland;' and *Hamburger Nachrichten*, Jul 30, 1921 (BA Potsdam: press clippings in the files of the Reichskommissar für die besetzten rheinischen Gebiete). And see *Rasse und Rassismus in der Filmpropaganda gegen die 'schwarze Schmach'* 1920–1923, eds. Hella Hertzfeldt and Katrin Schäfgen (Dietz, Berlin, 2004).

105 the Jakobsens, Fin und Margarete: diary, May 28, 1922.

107 reckless folly: diary, Jun 19, 1922. 'Der Verband zieht scheußlich.'

107 mother horrified: HH diary, Jun 24, 1922.

107 mother sent cakes: HH diary Jun 13, 1922.

107 strain showing: diary, Jun 26, 1922.

108 Farm Show: DLG (Deutsche Landwirtschafts Gesellschaft) show: HH diary, Jun 23–24, 1922.

108 up for it: diary, Jun 21, 1922. 'Ich glaube, man hätte sie haben können.'

108 Kaiser's anti-Semitism. So his physician Alfred Haehner quoted in his diary. Lothar Machtan, *Der Kaisersohn bei Hitler* (Hamburg 2006).

108 Organisation Consul: named, *e.g.* in *The New York Times* on Jun 27, 1922; Hitler referred to it freely as 'O.C.' in rather muddled testimony at his treason trial, Feb 27, 1924.

109 *uns erzählt*: diary, Jun 29, 1922. As they were presumably just two, it is the reflexive, *i.e.*, not 'He told us.' HH doubtless told him of the Jun 28 demo.

110 the Königsplatz demo: diary, Jun 28, 1922. Hermann Schützinger's report is quoted by Martin H Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914–1924* (Göttingen, 1998), p.120.

111 *die Weiber fielen natürlich um*: diary, Jul 2, 1922.

111 on Jews, North Germans, Austrians: diary, Jun 22, 1922.

111 'loathsome' Jew: diary, Jun 22, 1922; HH routinely spells *ekelhaft* as

eckelhaft. Peter Loewenberg (MS op. cit., fol. 42) concludes that HH had imbibed the then socially acceptable anti-Semitism from his surroundings, family, fraternity pals, and the bourgeois world of Bavaria.

111 Hans Kastl, Inaugural-Dissertation (München 1891), 'Die hygienischen Verhältnisse in Baumwoll-Spinnereien'; same author, *Gänzlich neue Wege, auf denen das verarmte Deutschland über Gen.-Steuer-Abbau und Beseitigung der Arbeitslosigkeit zu Wohlstand und Reichtum gelangt*, 1925. HH diary, Jul 5, 1922. On Feb 14, 1924 Dr Hans Kastl pronounces himself satisfied with HH's stomach: 'Just have to stick to diet.'

112 *faiblesse* for women: diary, Jun 9, 1922.

111 letter from Käthe Achternbusch: HH diary, Jun 27; replies, Jul 1, 3, 1922.

112 Wolfgang Hallgarten: see note to p.58 above.

113 Inge Barco: HH diary, Jul 3, 1922. The Germania-Brettl theatre had premiered Karl Valentin's comedy, *Das Christbaumbrettl* two days earlier. Christmas Eve, father Valentin arrives with the Christmas tree but no stand, or *Brettl*, for it; the children sing carols and a chimney sweep arrives.

114 diploma in four semesters, '*was ja eigentlich nicht legal ist*': HH diary, Jun 13, 1922 on his conv. with Prof. Ludwig Kiessling.

Chapter 9 : Hitler Puts his Cards on the Table

114 testimonial: Dir. Forster of Stickstoff Land GmbH, Testimonial for HH, Aug 30, 1923; and HH, curriculum vitae, copy (HL).

114 calcium cyanamide (*Kalkstickstoff, $CaCN_2$*): HH to Pohl, FHQu on Nov 29, 1941.

115 *Bund Bayern und Reich*: on which see Roy G Koepp's dissertation: 'Conservative Radicals: The Einwohnerwehr, Bund Bayern und Reich, and the Limits of Paramilitary Politics in Bavaria, 1918-1928' (University of Nebraska, Department of History, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2010).

116 meeting with Scharrer: 'Besprechung mit Hitler am 21.XII.22, Reginapalast Mü. Anwesend: [Gen.konsul Eduard August] Scharrer, Fürst Wrede, [Carl von Wrede, Führer des Reiterkorps des SA-Regiments München], Hitler' (Gerd Heidemann collection).

We first published this key document in our magazine *Focal Point* in 1982. Heidemann, a skilled reporter and investigator, bought Scharrer's original papers from a Munich auctioneer in the 1980s – a full-length record in Gabelsberger shorthand, and the shorthand pad containing the primary three-page version on which it was based, with Scharrer's questions and Hitler's answers. Auctioneer Wolfgang Hermann had asked NSDAP archivist Dr August Priesack to transcribe the full-length shorthand text. The Bundesarchiv acquired his transcript (BA: R43I/2681 fols. 85

ff.) Priesack did not get the smaller pad; Heidemann had it transcribed elsewhere and generously made it available to us. On Dec 30, 1922 Scharrer reported separately on this meeting to Reich Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno: see Prof. Eberhard Jäckel: *Hitler – Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen, 1905–1924*, Stuttgart, 1980, pp.770–775; this document is genuine, unlike other items in this volume which were forged by counterfeiter Konrad Kujau.

121 See too Scharrer to Hitler, Sep 17, 1930; and NSDAP to Scharrer, Sep 25, 1931 (Heidemann collection).

On May 2, 1923 Cuno commented: „Mit Ihnen bin ich der Meinung, daß man gewisse Überschwenglichkeiten und allzu laute Temperamentsausbrüche nationalistischer Bewegungen nicht tragisch zu nehmen braucht. Aber ich möchte auch daraus kein Hehl machen, daß ich in der Art und Weise, wie die nationalsozialistischen Führer und die nationalsozialistische Presse, etwa der *Völkische Beobachter* politische Fragen unter völliger Verkennung der realpolitischen Bedingtheiten unserer Lage behandeln, wie wenn es nur von uns abhinge, um von heut auf morgen frei zu werden, eine ernste Gefahr für die Einheit unseres Volkes sehe. Wir müssen jetzt alles auf die Einheitlichkeit der Abwehrfront an Rhein und Ruhr einstellen, und diesem Zweck wird durch solche Ausbrüche nicht nur nicht gedient, sondern schwer geschadet" (R43I/2217, fol. 231f).

118 Damaschke, Adolf Wilhelm (1865–1935) German economist: wrote *Die Bodenreform, Grundsätzliches und Geschichtliches* (Berlin, 1902).

118 Hofer: a Tyrolean patriot executed on Napoleon's orders in 1810. – Hitler often reverted to his perverse admiration for the British Empire; see the diary of Sir Eric Phipps, Jan 2, 23 ('fervent hope that India would never be lost to it'), 31, 34 etc. (Churchill College, PHPP.10/1).

119 allow interest only where *beneficial*: The difference between '*schaffendem und raffendem Zins*' was an important plank in the National Socialist programme. As early as this, Hitler was alert to the distinction between building factories and roads and the generation of bonds whose sole purpose was the creation of interest. This is an issue of relevance even today. Gottfried Feder's famous pamphlet on interest can now be found at http://www.archive.org/details/Feder-Gottfried-Das-Manifest-zur-Brechung-der-Zinsknechtschaft-1.

121 Armenian solution: Hitler verbatim: '*Wenn nicht, dann gibt es zwei Möglichkeiten, entweder eine blutige Auseinandersetzung oder die Armenisierung.*' As Heidemann comments, Hitler should have known how sanguinary this expulsion was, as his friend Max von Scheubner-Richter had been German vice-consul of Erzerum at the time and had documented the massacres of Armenians. Our shorthand expert Jutta Padel Anderson confirmed to us that both texts contain the Gabelsberger outline '*Armenisierung.*' Jäckel

did not publish (or perhaps know about) the primary three-page version in Heidemann's possession. Heidemann remarks on 'how thoughtlessly Jäckel and the German Federal Archives dealt with such items.'

121 donation: the NSDAP issued a written receipt on Feb 23, 1923. The donation did not remain secret for long – the *Münchner Post* publishing a mocking item on Apr 3, 1923 about a donor from Stuttgart who lived in Bernried and had *zusammenge'scharrt'* the funds; it is in Scharrer's papers.

Chapter 10: Putsch

123 'Messiah': as HH said to Karl Wolff, which Wolff described on several occasions.

124 Karolina Gahr: Statement, Oct 14, 1947; quoted by Anton Joachimsthaler, *Hitlers Liste. Ein Dokument persönlicher Beziehungen* (München 2003), p.234.

124 Stabswache: Peter Hoffmann, *Security of Hitler*, New York, 2000, pp.10f. For the *Stosstrupps*'s rampage on Nov 10, 1938 see the Goebbels diary.

124 hydrocephalus: *Völkischer Beobachter,* Mar 22, 1923.

125 Jews as hostages: 'Hitler Organization Declared Illegal,' *The New York Times*, March 17, 1923.

125 *Artamanenbund*: founded in ca. 1923, it was absorbed by Richard Walther Darré's Reichsnährstand, the Reich Agriculture Corporation, in 1933. Under the new Inherited Estate Law, Darré as Reichsbauernführer issued special *Erbhof* plaques to designate pure Aryan farms; the Odal rune on the plaque was the symbol of the Germanic farmer. – See too Michael H Kater, 'Die Artamanen – Völkische Jugend in der Weimarer Republik,' in *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 213 (1971), pp.577-638.

125 essay on peasant policies: 'Völkische Bauernpolitik,' undated, in BDC file Himmler, folder 1.

127 Arnold Ruge (1881–1945). See Klaus Graf, 'Eine von Himmler angeregte antikirchliche Kampfschrift Arnold Ruges (1881-1945) über die Hexenprozesse, 1936,' in *Himmlers Hexenkartothek. Das Interesse des Nationalsozialismus an der Hexenverfolgung*, eds.: Sönke Lorenz *et al.* (Bielefeld, 1999), pp.35–45. Ruge's 1936 MS, 'Die mittelalterlichen Hexenprozesse. Ein Abschnitt aus dem deutschen Kulturkampf,' typescript, 87 pp., is in Ruge's papers (Landesarchiv Karlsruhe, GLA 69N Ruge/8). HH relinquished his share of the Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft GmbH in 1936. There was a reputable Berlin company of that name which published volumes on foreign policy.

128 *Deutscher Kampfbund* or 'Fighting Alliance,' formed: Weber's testimony, at the Hitler Trial, Feb 27, 1924. We used the original 2,916-page transcript,

'Hauptverhandlung gegen Hitler u. Gen. wegen Hochverrats,' Volksgericht München I, Feb 26, 1924 to Apr 1, 1924 (RG-1048, Records of Adjutant Gen., NA microfilm T-84, rolls 1–3). – Historians like Regius Prof. Richard J Evans have preferred the four-volume version subsequently published by L. Gruchmann and R. Weber, *Der Hitler-Prozeß* 1924 (Munich, 1997–1999), 1,662 pp. It is printed, handier, and has an index.

128 triumvirate consisted of *Gen.staatskommissar* Gustav von Kahr (1862–1934); Gen. Otto von Lossow (1863–1938); and Col. Hans von Seisser (1874–1973).

130 *Ostjuden* expelled: Deuerlein, *Der Hitler Putsch*, Stuttgart 1962, Doc. 276, p.690; as national pests: '*Schädlinge am deutschen Volk*.' See Geyer, p.342.

130 Aufsess. His speech is quoted in the trial, Mar 12, 1924, afternoon session; and see E Deuerlein: *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Augenzeugenberichten (*München 1986), p.187.

131 Reichswehr trained the *Sturmabteilung, SA*. Hitler's testimony in closed session on Feb 28, 1924.

131 heed any objections: Generalleutn. a.D. Otto von Lossow, testimony, Mar 10, 1924 (T-84, roll 2).

131 Oct 24, 1923 conference: Lossow's testimony, Mar 10, 1924 (T-84, roll 2).

131 Oct 25, 1923 conference: Seisser's testimony, Mar 12, 1924 (T-84, roll 2).

131 Oct 27, 1923 speech: Seisser's cross-examination, Mar 14, 1924, afternoon (T-84, roll 2).

131 raise a cavalry unit: Hitler testimony in closed session, Mar 15, 1924 (T-84, roll 2).

131 Nov 6, 1923 conference: cross-examination of Kahr in closed session, Mar 12, 1924, with excerpts from the conference transcript (T-84, roll 2).

133 inflation: Gustav von Kahr, testimony, Mar 11, 1924 (NA film T-84, roll 2); see Detlev Mühlberger, *Hitler's Voice, the Völkischer Beobachter,* 1920-1933, vol. 2 (P. Lang, Michigan, 2004), p.53.

133 Löwenbräu: Evidence for HH's role in the putsch is thin, effectively only the Party chronicles: See *e.g.* the laudatio to HH on his tenth anniversary as Reichsführer SS, in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Jan 6, 1939.

134 Kriebel's and Ludendorff's testimony was given on Feb 29, 1924, T-84, roll 1.

134 Gruber: *Geheimrat* Dr Max Ritter von Gruber, testimony, Mar 7, 1924 (NA film T-84, roll 2).

137 bigoted: testimony of 'Meldekopf' Hoffmann (Chef der Nachrichtenstelle bei Hitler), Mar 4, 1924, trial transcript, *ibid*., at p.887. Prof. R J Evans, testifying as chief defence expert in *Irving vs. Penguin Books & Lipstadt*

(Day 20, Feb 15, 2000, at pp.197–209) argued that Hoffmann was a loyal Nazi. He omitted Hoffmann's sentence: 'Hitler hat diese Gewalttätigkeiten und diese einzelnen Ausschreitungen, die vorgekommen sind, ständig verurteilt.' Mr Justice Gray unfortunately bought it.

137 Brückner testified on Mar 1, 1924.

138 Blood Flag: The 'Stosstrupp Hitler' received the *Blutfahne*, Blood Flag, because it occupied City Hall, arrested the Marxist councillors, was in the vanguard of the 1923 march to the Feldherrnhalle, arrested police who blocked the streets, returned the police gunfire, and took two dead. Burwitz to Heinrich Fraenkel, Jan 25, 1967 (Univ. of New Mexico, Fraenkel papers).

139 a patriotic student: an emotional handwritten account, Munich, Nov 18, 1923 from Maria R., to L.M., copied to HH on Jun 20, 1924 (HL, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, roll 98, roll 1, fol.272).

141 two of his men: testimony of Ernst Röhm, Mar 1, 1924; and referred to in his memoirs, *Die Geschichte eines Hochverräters* (Franz Eher Verlag, Munich 1928). Oberleutnant Max Braun, the company commander, denied shooting Casella.

Chapter 11: Sibling Rivalry

142 from the Caucasus: HH diary, Feb 12, 1924.

142 bookstore windows: diary, Feb 14, 1924.

142 *Faust*: diary, Feb 14, 1924.

142 a paramilitary comrade: Extracts from letters from HH to Heinrich Gärtner, Dec 2, 1923, Jan 7 and 25, 1924 (Hoover Inst., NSDAP Hauptaarchiv, roll 52, folder 1222). Gärtner, b. Feb 27, 1897 in Nürnberg, was later SS *Brigadeführer*, chief of the SS Waffenamt until May 1944 and Amtschef für technische Sonderaufträge until May 8, 1945.

142 Beach-basket 57, a collection of short stories, was published by the Jewish publishing house of Ullstein (Berlin, 1921). HH (diary, Feb 19, 1924) called it 'ein ganz harmloses aber ganz nettes Buch.'

143 anthology: Baron Adolf Viktor von Koerber, *Adolf Hitler, His Life, his Speeches* (Volksverlag, Munich, 1923); *cf. VB*, No. 215, Oct 23, 1923]. On Koerber (1906–1968) see his papers, 1797–1968, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. He later fell out with Hitler and had treacherous dealings with the British military attaché.

143 *Ein Sadist im Priesterrock* (Leipzig, 1904). The priest's victim was Mlle. Marie-Cathérine Cadière. The volume was 'Im Deutschen Reich verboten.' The same author wrote *Die Hexe von Klewan* (Dresden, 1901). On which see Carola Hilmes, 'Er war nichts als das Opfer eines wollüstigen Weibes.

Die Hexe von Klewan und der Machtkampf der Geschlechter,' in: *Frauen, Kunst, Wissenschaft* 8 (1995), pp.18–25.

143 Osswald: diary, Feb 11, 1924.

143 treason-trial judge: see *e.g.* the partisan account by lawyer Otto Gritschneder: *Der Hitler-Prozeß und sein Richter Georg Neithardt: Skandalurteil von 1924 ebnet Hitler den Weg* (Verlag C H Beck, München 2001).

143 very junior: Fraenkel's interview of Gebhard Himmer, 1963 (UNM).

144 Prof. Karl Rothenbücher, *Der Fall Kahr* (Tübingen, 1924). HH describes this work (diary, Feb 18, 1924) as 'confiscated.'

144 visits Röhm: diary, Feb 15, 1924. Manvell & Fraenkel say he went there on his motorbike. Unlikely, as the diary entry continues: 'Mit der Trambahn zum Stachus.'

144 stomach problems: letter to Heiner Gärtner, Jan 7, 1924, *loc. cit.*; diary, Feb 14, 1924 he had written after seeing Dr Kastl. 'He's very satisfied with my stomach. I just have to stick to the diet.' On Feb 24 he added: 'Stomach still playing up on me.'

144 great sermon: diary, Feb 17,1924.

145 Paula Stölzle: diary, Nov 7, 1921; Jan 28 and 29, May 31, Jun 14, 1922. Her mother is listed as 'banker's widow' in the 1936 Weilheim address book, living at No. 6, Murnauer Strasse – in 1924 the address had been at No. 591; the Weilheim bank was Bankhaus Stölzle & Simader (1872–1974). Heinrich's letter to Paula is dated Apr 18, 1923 (HL NSDAP HA roll 98 file 7; and see BA: NL 1126 /13 und 19). His letter log (HL: NSDAP HA roll 99, file 1) records that he wrote to Aunt Hermine on Sep 5, 1917 and she replied Sep 25, 1917; between Nov 8, 1921 and Apr 29, 1922 they exchanged five more letters.

145 campaign against Paula: diary, Feb 11, 12, 15, 18 and 19, 1924. Letter from HH to Rössner, of the Strassen- und Flussbauamt in Weilheim, Mar 12, 1924; and report by Max Blüml, Mar 14, 1924 (HL NSDAP HA roll 98 file 7). Gebhard's wife Mathilde told author Fraenkel in 1963 that HH had not approved of her either; nor had either parent approved of Paula. As for the diary note (Feb 11, 1924), ('Gebhard shakes it off like a poodle'), Gebhard 'roared with laughter' when Fraenkel read it to him.

Ferdinand Mirwald (1872–1948), a Dachau artist and woodcarver, had married his secretary in 1905; their son Oskar was born 1911. Dr Norbert Göttler, *Ferdinand Mirwald, Maler, Zeichner und Holzschneider (*Dachau 1988). Frau Mag. Daniela Mirwald of Vienna confirms to us that her grandfather's portraits of Paula, dated 1924 and 1925, are in her family's possession.

147 Maja Loritz: diary, Feb 12, 1924.

147 *Kartenmädchen* (street-girls): diary, Feb 13, 1924.

147 Irmgard: diary, Feb 20, 1924.

147 committed supporter: letter to Heiner Gärtner, Jan 25, 1924, *loc. cit.*

148 visits Epfach: diary, Feb 2, 1924.

148 Lüdecke: b. Berlin, Feb 5, 1890, d. Prien am Chiemsee, 1960. Facsimile of Hitler's letter: Kurt G W Lüdecke, *I Knew Hitler: The Story of a Nazi who Escaped the Blood Purge* (London, 1938), p.176. He wrote it as evidence of a change of beliefs, and in English; his U.S.-citizenship application failed in 1938 and he was later interned as an enemy alien.

148 saw through him: 'Reichsführer SS Himmler über Lüdecke im Jahre 1925,' stamped 'dem Führer vorgelegt,' Dec 7, 1934 (Rasmussen collection).

150 roughed up the merchant's agent. Diary, Feb 25, 1924: 'Den nahmen die Bauern glaube ich hernach zwischen die Finger.'

151 Kahr in barracks: Statement by Verteidiger *Justizrat* Willibald von Zezschwitz, Mar 12, 1924, afternoon, closed session.

151 similar pronouncements: In 1994 the Mannheim, Germany, *Landgericht* judge Dr R Orlet hearing the appeal by ex-grammar schoolteacher Günter Deckert against a prison sentence imposed for chairing our 1991 talk in Weinheim adjudged that he was a good father and a patriotic and responsible school teacher of irreproachable character and principles who had defended his beliefs 'with great personal commitment and cost in time and energy.' The outraged Berlin minister of justice Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger ordered the judge and his two colleagues into early retirement on 'health grounds.' Deckert served five years of the resulting eleven-year sentence, from 1995—2000. He confirmed the dates on Dec 2, 2020.

152 Landsberg visitors: 'Register of visitors to the Fortress Prisoner Adolf Hitler,' Apr 1 – Dec 20, 1924 (HL, Records of the NSDAP Hauptarchiv, folder 1501: microfilm roll 69). See Otto Gritschneder's article, 'Adolf H. aus B.,' in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Der Spiegel*, No. 16/1989. A Landsberg visitor's book, perhaps the same one, was sold at auction in 2006: *ibid*., Jun 23, 2006. – By way of comparison: as a political prisoner in the Vienna Central Jail in 2006 we were allowed, after three months, one fifteen-minute visit per week, speaking through a soundproof window by phone.

151 black-haired Jewish boy: *Mein Kampf*, vol. 1, 1927 edition, p.357.

Chapter 12: Buys a new Black Cap

153 HH's reading list: Bradley F Smith, *Heinrich Himmler: A Nazi in the Making,* 1900–1926 (Stanford, 1971). See 'Alles Einschlägige,' in *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 30/1971, pp.52–53; an article curiously repeated word for word eight years later in No. 16/1979, pp.62–65.

154 fascinating ideas: The actual list is headed 'Gelesene Bücher,' from 1926 to 1934, and is in the German Captured Document Collection, box 418, Library of Congress. See Bradley F Smith, *op.cit.,* pp.146–147.

154 HH to Entholzner, Aug 1, 1924 (auctioned on Apr 13, 2002 by Axel Schmolt as Lot 94: Henneke collection).

156 a correspondent in Milan: HH to Robert Kessler, Aug 22, 1924: HL, NSDAP HA, roll 98, file 1); published with no name ('an einem Bekannten') by Michael Wildt in *Himmler privat. Briefe eines Massenmörders* (Piper Verlag, Munich, 2014), p. 30.

157 Hitler virtually unknown in 1923: Heinrich Fraenkel interview of Gebhard Himmler, Nov 23, 1963 (UNM, Box 1, folder 13).

157 Several works, *e.g.* Heinrich Hoffmann's memoirs, reproduce a photo of Hitler 'addressing the constituent assembly of the Party in 1925,' with HH at his side. In fact the photo was taken in Aug/Sep 1928. The Party badge visible in HH's buttonhole makes that clear.

157 Gründungsurkunde der NSDAP: 'Verschollene "Nazi"-Dokumente aufgetaucht,' *Spiegel*, Mar 12, 2004. The handwritten originals, stamped Central Collecting Point, Munich, are owned by the daughter of a GI.

160 Hitler-shirt: HH to Schillversand, Aug 13, 1926 (NA film T175, roll 99, p.0147).

160 HH's room: Note on a visit to Frau Mathilde Scheubner-Richter, Apr 3, 1936 (HL, NSDAP HA, roll 53, folder 1263; BA: NS 26/116).

161 'Marianne' to 'lieber HH,' Rio, Sep 8, 1926 (HL: NSDAP HA roll 98, file 1).

161 by motorbike: letter from Albert Wierheim to HH, Sep 4, 1926 (BDC, Himmler folder 1). Wierheim, b. Nov 9, 1885 in Plauen in the Vogtland, was later a gauleiter of Saxony.

161 Sanssouci speech: Typescript: 'Nationaler oder internationaler Sozialismus,' Pg. Himmler, on 13. Okt 1926 in the Sanssouci, small salon. (HL).

Chapter 13: *Where Did You Get that Hat?*

164 snowstorm: Gebhard Himmler interviewed by Roger Fraenkel, letter to Heinrich Manvell, Nov 23, 1963: (UNM, Box 1, folder 13), and see Manvell, *Heinrich Himmler*, p.27; corrected by Wulf Dieter Burwitz, Jan 25, 1967 (UNM, Fraenkel papers).

165 Goncerzewo: Marga's Party membership card has the correct German spelling; the village, at 53°12'11"N 17°45'02"E, is now Gończarzewy in Poland. Margarete Boden wrote a 100-page handwritten diary, 1909–1916, near Bromberg (Bydgoszcz), then in Belgium as a Great War nurse and after that in Berlin. Germany later refused Marga Himmler a widow's pension (an entitlement which Hitler preserved no matter how vexatious

his enemies), on the pretext that she was unable to prove that her husband had been Reichsführer SS. 'Probably sounds absurd to you,' her daughter Gudrun wrote to biographer Heinrich Fraenkel, seeking his assistance on Jul 4, 1965 (UNM). Marga died two years later on Aug 25, 1967 in Munich. See Christina Wittler, 'Leben im Verborgenen, Die Witwe des Reichsführers SS Heinrich Himmler, Margarete Himmler (1893–1967),' in Bärbel Sunderbrink (ed.), *Frauen in der Bielefelder Geschichte* (Bielefeld, 2010), pp.193–204; well researched but written with the customary spleen of German historians.

165 Sulzbach: Pocket diary, 1927 (BA, NL1126/6): pocket diary Nov 15, 1926 – Nov 14, 1927: it prints just the date; he entered the weekday and year by hand.

165 'Dear Mr Himmler': Some authors, *e.g.* Heinz Höhne, claim HH met Margarete in Bad Reichenhall in Dec 1926, but that is wrong. The HL film, roll 98, file 1) contains Marga's letter, dated Sep 29, 1927; printed without source by Michael Wildt, *Hitler privat*, and also her letters of Sep 27, Oct 16, Nov 2, 7, 12, 21 and 26, 1927; and Dec 21, and 31, 1927. For her education and subsequent life see her *Entnazifierungsfragebogen* dated Sep 23, 1947: file NW 1023, No. 7011 (Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen Rheinland).

166 Erich Ludendorff, *Vernichtung der Freimaurerei durch Enthüllung ihrer Geheimnisse* (Destruction of Freemasonry through Revelation of their Secrets), self-published by Ludendorff in 1927.

167 HH to Gustav Seifert, Feb 26, 1927 (Adolf-Hitler Collection, Seeley Mudd Libr., Princeton Univ.; Henneke collection). See Seifert's 1934 narrative, 'Zur Frühgeschichte der NSDAP in Niedersachsen' (BA file NS 26/141).

167 HH to Kurt Könnecke, Oct 27, 1927 (auctioned by Berliner Auktionshaus für Geschichte as Lot 2979 on Jun 5, 2011; Henneke collection).

169 You're crazy: Otto Strasser, *loc. cit.*

169 stolen from the family home: Two American soldiers looted hundreds of letters from HH's home, Lindenfycht in Gmund, Bavaria in 1945. In 1964, when Marga was living at Heepen No. 107, near Bielefeld – not far from Walther Hewel's widow – *Stern* magazine reported in an article, 'Himmler's Briefe,' that an American was offering 278 of Marga's letters, dated mostly 1927 to 1933, for sale, including some dated as late as Apr 17, 1945; price: 100,000 marks. Viennese-born publisher George Weidenfeld stated that in the 1970s he too was offered the stolen letters (*Welt am Sontag*, May 15, 2005), but decided against publication.

Their unseemly provenance is now known. They were offered for sale at a New York auction, and stolen again. Chaim Rosenthal, then consul for cultural affairs at Israel's Consulate in New York, bid unsuccessfully. An Englishman bid successfully for them. Rosenthal offered to carry them to

Europe. The Briton agreed, but never saw them again. Rosenthal stole the letters and gave them to the University of Tel Aviv; the university returned them, upon learning that they were stolen property, and Rosenthal hid the loot under his bed for forty years. Rosenthal once telephoned Gudrun and secretly recorded her for broadcast in Israel. The late Judith Moses, an ABC News correspondent, researched the whole sordid case for several years (she later wrote for *National Geographic* magazine). On Feb 6, 1989 she confirmed this history to us: the university 'did not want anything to do with them'; Rosenthal was declared *persona non grata* in the USA. Judith Moses's language about Rosenthal to us was highly uncomplimentary (she said the university called him a 'sleazebag'), and ABC never broadcast the resulting segment.

The Bundesarchiv was allowed to view the letters on microfilm, and authenticated them to Riki Shelach, Tel Aviv, Mar 12, 1984 (USHMM). We corresponded with Shelach, a film director, in 2011. The stolen letters were recently sold to the father of an Israel-based filmmaker, Vanessa Lapa. Gudrun Himmler, to whom the letters legally belonged, refrained from action. A documentary film *The Decent One* resulted.

Chaim Rosenthal died in 2012. His name is glossed over in publications although it was known to the media, *e.g. New York Times*, Jan 26, 2014: 'Chaim Rosenthal, an Israeli artist and collector, told reporters at a news conference in New York in 1982 that he had bought the collection that year for $40,000 from the former adjutant to Gen. Karl Wolff.' He said the adjutant had stolen them from Wolff. This was not true, Wolff never had them. Israeli newspapers helpfully reported other implausible versions, including that Rosenthal had bought the letters at a flea market in Brussels. The letters written by HH, Margarete, and Gudrun, eight diaries, and family photographs were finally published in *Yediot Aharonot* in Israel and Axel Springer's *Die Welt* in Germany in Jan 2014. Michael Wildt published some in *Himmler privat. Briefe eines Massenmörders* (Piper Verlag, Munich, 2014), but he masks their real provenance, and that his selection includes several from known Bundesarchiv sources and HL microfilm.

Dr Henke of the Bundesarchiv, the German Federal Archives, noted that the (stolen) materials in Tel Aviv were a total of twenty rolls of microfilm, either filmed before destruction by the Germans or the Allies, or as a working copy side by side with originals; he noted they consisted mainly of HH's correspondence with Margarete, 1927–45 (15 rolls, totalling about 700 handwritten letters), her diaries, 1909–16 (originals in handwriting), her diary kept for daughter Gudrun, 1929–36 (originals in handwriting), her own diary, 1937–44 (microfilm, three rolls, handwritten), Gudrun's diary, 1941–45 (original in handwriting); a letter from Gudrun to her

mother, Sep 20, 1943, (original in handwriting), a letter from HH's parents to HH, Oct 1, 1935 (original in handwriting), 56 personal or service photos from HH's possession (positive), four photos and two postcards with handwritten annotations, e.g. dedications to Gudrun and others in HH's hand, and miscellaneous items including HJ IDs, school reports for HH's foster-son Gerhard von der Ahé, NSDAP membership card for Marga, school reports for Gerhard von der Ahé, a programme note for Bavarian State Theatre, cookery and housekeeping books for Margarete, and poetry books for Gudrun. A letter dated Oct 1, 1935 to HH from his parents for his 35th birthday was added to the collection subsequently, as the Israelis confirm.

170 accursed Landshut: the letters from Marga, Jan 6, 7, Feb 3, 24, Mar 2, May 5, 1928, quoted in *Himmler privat*, pp. 84–5.

170 thousand communists: Quoted by Katrin Himmler, *Die Brüder Himmler* (Frankfurt/M, 2005), p.121.

172 Dr Herzberg's daughter (Waltraud): see Rolf Gerlach, *Mieze predige Du! Lebensweg des Brandenburgischen Pfarrers Ulrich Herzberg (*1887-1962*)* (Berlin, 1997), p.71. Our thanks to Nadine Muth of the Zepernick archives for this.

172 In his papers in the HL is the wedding announcement: 'Heinrich Himmler / Diplom-Landwirt / Marga Himmler / geb. Boden / vermählte / München – Berlin, 3. Juli 1928.' She writes in her diary on Jul 3, 1938: 'I have been married for ten years today.'

173 Letter with illegible signature to, 'mein lieber HH' Aug 25, 1928: HL, NSDAP HA, roll 98, file 7.

174 ambiguous: The actual passage in *Mein Kampf*, p.344, reads: '*Hätte man zu Kriegsbeginn und während des Krieges einmal zwölf- oder fünfzehntausend dieser hebräischen Volksverderber so unter Giftgas gehalten, wie Hunderttausende unserer allerbesten deutschen Arbeiter aus allen Schichten und Berufen es im Felde erdulden mußten, dann wäre das Millionenopfer der Front nicht vergeblich gewesen. Im Gegenteil: Zwölftausend Schurken zur rechten Zeit beseitigt, hätte vielleicht einer Million ordentlicher, für die Zukunft wertvoller Deutschen das Leben gerettet.*' – If at the beginning of, or during, the war twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been kept under poison gas just as hundreds of thousands of our very finest German workers of all classes and professions had to suffer on the battlefield, then our millionfold sacrifice would not have been in vain. On the contrary: bumping off twelve thousand villains at the right time might have saved the lives of a million decent Germans of value for our future. – It may have been HH's father who underlined the passage, as he also read this volume. See Richard Breitman, 'Mein Kampf and the

Himmler Family: Two Generations React to Hitler's Ideas,' in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 13 (1999), pp.90–97. HH's marked copy of *Mein Kampf* is now in the Museum of National Heritage in New York.

Chapter 14: *Reichsführer at Twenty-Eight*

176 SS Order No. 2: In the Hoover Library is a collection of SS Orders, 1927-1932. HL, NSDAP-Hauptarchiv, folder No. 1874, fols. 1-84.

176 don't keep me waiting: Karl [Kaufmann?] to HH, Feb 16, 1928 (HL: NSDAP HA roll 98, file 1, fols 229, 229/1).

177 Murr: HH to ~~Karl~~ (amended to) 'Hans' Frank and Wilhelm Murr, Mar 29, 1928 (Adolf Hitler-Collection, Seeley Mudd Libr., Princeton Univ.; Henneke collection).

178 Meeting in the atrium: Photo No. Hoff-6846 in the Hoffmann Collection of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: 'Führertagung 30. August - 2. September 1928.' – Hoffmann antedates it in his memoirs to the Neugründung der NSDAP on Feb 27, 1925. Others follow his mistake: *e.g.*, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Photo archive, No. 38115, and Bradley F Smith und Agnes F Peterson (ed.) in *Heinrich Himmler – Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen* (Frankfurt 1974). HH is wearing his Party badge – but he joined six months after the *Neugründung* function. Next to him are Karl Fiehler, later a Reichsleiter, taking the minutes; Julius Streicher, gauleiter of Nuremberg, and Robert Ley, who became Germany's labour chief.

178 Rosenberg: Otto Bräutigam MS: Alfred Rosenberg, seine Ostkonzeption und die Begründung des Ostministeriums, IfZ, ZS-0400, part 1.

178 'Dear Mr Hitler': HH to Hitler, Sep 17, 1928: this has passed through several auction houses, *e.g.* Alexander Autographs, Sep 2004, as Lot 403: www.liveauctioneers.com/item/486595 (Henneke collection).

179 Not a chicken-farmer: *e.g.* the Holocaust History Project timeline: '1927—Poultry Farmer. After his failure with chickens, Himmler was appointed leader of the SS in January 1929.' And again, where Fraenkel wrote that it was neither practical nor possible to remain a 'chicken farmer,' Burwitz points out that HH never was one.

179 *Bundschuh*: On which see Christoph Neuberger, 'Nationalsozialistische Presse und "Gleichschaltung" der Tageszeitungen in Ingolstadt,' in *Ingolstadt im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Studie* (Ingolstadt, 1995), pp.260–273. Neuberger was unaware of HH's 'Bundschuh' letterhead. At least one 1928 issue was published, as a successor to *Völkische Bauernschaft*, by the Berlin Volksverlag; it appeared in 1929 as a supplement in these NS newspapers at least: *Der nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*; *Die Faust*; *Berliner Arbeiterzeitung*. Two libraries hold scattered copies of *Bundschuh*, Bayerische

Staatsbibliothek and the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, a supplement to 1928 and 1929 series of Berliner *Arbeiterzeitung* and *Die Faust*; *Bundschuh* was a successor to *Völkische Bauernschaft, Mitteilungen für das NS Landvolk*, in 1926 and 1927. Fritz Reinhardt was gauleiter of Upper Bavaria 1928 to 1930, and editor of *Donaubote* from Oct 1930 to Mar 1931.

179 Wolff and Darré: CCPWE#32 report X–P 12, Darré in conv. with a US army officer, May 29, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

180 'family and economic reasons': Hitlers Verfügung, Jan 20, 1929 (BA file, NS 19/1934, fol. 34). Heiden's body was discovered in Sep 1933, and buried on Sep 15, 1933. He was abducted from the Cafe Heck (some say from the Cafe Orlando). Nachlass Julius Schaub, in private hands. The only source on Heiden's death is the 1949 testimony of Party veteran Josef Gerum. Alerted by Heiden's mother, Emil Maurice came to Gerum and both took it up with August Schneidhuber, the Polizei-Präsident in Munich; all three then went to HH who 'flew into a rage and forbade any further interference.' See Anna Maria Sigmund, *Des Führers bester Freund* (Heyne, Munich, 2003), p. 213; she cites an affidavit by Gerum dated Jan 22, 1948 in Regensburg.

181 Jun 1944 data: Statistisch-wissenschaftliches Institut des Reichsführers-SS (BA: NS 19/1471).

181 decoded signals: 'On January 6, 1929 Heinrich Himmler became Reichsführer-SS' (PRO file HW.16/37).

181 adjutants: HH to Rudolf Hess, Jul 20, 1929: Helmut Heiber (*ed.*), 'Akten der Parteikanzlei' (microfiche collection).

181 Wagener: Henry Ashby Turner (ed.): *Otto Wagener: Hitler aus nächster Nähe, Noten eines Vertrauten* 1929–1932 (Ullstein, W. Berlin, 1978). See ZS-177, interview of Franz von Pfeffer und Salomon, Feb 20, 1953 (IfZ): 'Damals faßte Hitler grundsätzlich den Entschluß, die SA einmal zu zerschlagen.' He smarted for years over a letter that Hitler had once written him, saying that he no longer had faith in him.

182 SS Order: SS Befehl Nr. 12/1929, Aug 29, 1929; see note to p.175.

182 tabs and badges: the 1929 Parteitag badge was later elevated to the higher status of an award. Fakes of it are often sold at auction.

183 Gudrun: Telegram Heinrich and Marga Himmler to his parents, 6:50 p.m., Aug 8, 1929 (HL).

183 Letter from Otto Strasser: Marga to HH, letter, May 5, 1929 (HL).

184 Harzburg front: Marga to HH, letter Oct 10, 1931 (HL).

185 Learning of his death: CSDIC/200/MU/15/X-22, Interrog. of Marga Himmler and Gudrun, May 24, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/12603). Il *Giornale del Mattino*, Rome, also published in United Press writer Ann String-

er's interview of them in Cine Città, being used by the Americans as a detention centre, on Jul 4, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/12603).

185 all her misery: Undated handwritten transcript, 'Margaret Himmler' (Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, Iowa: Benjamin Silliman Papers).

186 Wolff: Transcript of Gerd Heidemann's conv. with Karl Wolff in Chile, Jun 26, 1979.

186 Catherine: Fraenkel interview of Catherine Leber, 1963 (UNM).

186 album: a handwritten entry dated Gmund, May 18, 1941.

186 journal: a page from Gudrun's diary, Jul 12, 1941 (USHMM).

187 Langbehn: Gudrun's album page lies unremarked in the USHMM archives. Elke Langbehn married Sir Harold Atcherley, and died in 2004, a close friend of the English anti-"Nazi," Christabel Bielenberg. On Elke, see Manfred Flügge: *Rettung ohne Retter, oder: Ein Zug aus Theresienstadt* (Munich, 2004) and Michael Budczies: *Meine Familie: Geschichte und Geschichten* (Limburg, 1999).

Chapter 15: Jews not Admitted

188 SS strengths Dec 1930: Himmler to Röhm, Oct 2, 1931 (NA film T580, roll 88). – Data from 'Gesamt-Meldung der SS für den Monat Dezember 1931;' Jan 25, 1932. This breaks it down into eight SS *Abschnitte*, and the *Standarten* (HL: NSDAP-Hauptarchiv, folder No. 1874, fols. 1-84).

189 Langenfass: quoted by Björn Mensing, *Pfarrer und Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen 1998), p.74.

190 Marga, letters to HH, Sep 19, 1928; May 1, Sep 24, 1929 (HL). – Rhode Island Red: *ibid*., Oct 11, 1929 (HL).

190 rivals: Goebbels diary, Nov 22, 1929.

190 no locks: Karl Wolff MS, ZS-317 (IfZ).

190 older brother: Gebhard Himmler, Persönliche Charakteristik des ehemaligen Reichsführers SS Heinrich Himmler, Jul 28, 1946.

190 postcard from Strassers to HH, 1929: sold by Hermann Historica, Munich in Mai 2007 as Lot 7367.

190 post-war Chancellor: Konrad Adenauer, speaking on Aug 30, 1953, amplifying his speech to the Bundestag on Dec 3, 1952.

192 Vienna: Original leaflet in HL, NSDAP Microfilm.

192 appointed Goebbels: Goebbels diary, Mar 22, 23; Apr 28, 1930.

192 HH to Max Pferdekaemper, Apr 15, 1930: facsimile in Reimund Schnabel: *Macht ohne Moral. Eine Dokumentation über die SS* (Frankfurt am Main 1957), p.21 (Henneke collection); the letterhead reads incidentally still

Propaganda Abteilung, NSDAP, Schelling Strasse. And see BA: N 1230 Pferdekaemper.

192 Hess: promoted by HH on Jun 26, 1933 to Honorary *OGruf.*, Hess objected, and in Oct 1937 had Bormann request of HH that in future his name not be included in the *Rangliste der SS*. Hess also declined to answer an SS questionnaire (Correspondence between HH, OSAF, and Hess's private secretary Hildegard Fath: Parteikanzlei files, *loc. cit.*, 306 60456). – Maj. Walter Buch, the Party supreme court judge, found himself appointed an Honorary *Gruppenführer*. See his IMT interrog May 1 and esp. May 16, 1947: 'Am 9.11.34 – ohne daß ich etwas dazu getan habe – wurde ich zum SS *Gruppenführer* ernannt und bekam dann wie alle diese Leute, die an hohen Staatsstellen waren, diese Fangschnur für die sogenannten Ehrenführer. Ich bekam nicht die große weiße, sondern diese schwarz-silberne. das war der Unterschied zwischen dem Ehrengruppenführern und den aktiven Gruppenführern.'

193 *gottgläubig:* Fraenkel interview of Catherine Leber, 1963 (UNM).

193 Waldeck: IMT interrog., Mar 5, 1947 in Dachau (ZS-1571).

193 Brown House: see Ulrike Grammbitter, 'Braunes Haus, München,' in: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns, at: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/artikel/artikel_44454.

193 utterly corrupt: Heinrich Brüning MS, written 1934 (Syracuse Univ., George Arents Research Library, Dorothy Thompson collection.) – Letter to Winston Churchill: On Feb 7, 1948 Brüning asked Daniel Longwell, chief editor of *Life* magazine, not to publish the text in the Churchill history volumes because of the tragedy suffered by Europe's Jews since 1938. (Columbia Univ., New York City: Butler Library: Longwell papers).

193 clean record: about which Marga wrote him on Nov 14, 1931: 'Letter came from the prosecutor. Because you've a clean record you've been fined 200 marks. What now? Do something against it.'

195 Hallermann: Lieut. (ret.) Georg Hallermann, Pfeffer's adjutant from Nov 1925 to Feb 24, 1930, a friend of Bormann, is visible in photos with HH at Schelling Strasse. He died on Sep 24, 1930, the day after an SA *Standarte* (Dortmund) was named after him.

195 election campaign 1930: The inch-thick National Propaganda Directorate (*Reichspropagandaleitung*) file is in California (HL, NSDAP Reichspro-agandaleitung der NSDAP, 2000C34–10, General Election Sep 14, 1930, Original documents, July and August 1930). A number of names leaps out of this file: Edmund Heines, of the Upper Palatinate sub-gau – he had been a crony of Erhard Heiden's in the uniform, badges, and buttons franchise; and Lieutenant-Commander Manfred von Killinger, the Free Corps officer and assassin; and of course Dr Goebbels (all would meet violent ends).

196 Hotel Kristeiner: Ortsgruppenführer Erwin Metzner to HH, Aug 12, 1930, *ibid*.

197 Wilhelm Kube to HH, Aug 18, and reply, Aug 19, 1930; his secretary notes, 'Him/Schl.'

197 unanswered: HH to Thuringia, Aug 10, and Silesia, Aug 13, 1930.

197 Himmler reconstructing: see his aide memoire of May 24, 1941 (NA film T175, roll 123, 8772ff).

199 Stennes MS, Jul 1968 (IfZ: ZS-1147, vol. II). – 'How it came to the Stennes putsch!', typescript in NSDAP archives, IfZ: Fa.88/83. Lieutenant of the Reserve Walter Jahn, the author, was Stennes' chief of staff. Stennes testified (letter to Helmuth Krausnick, Nov 12, 1956, IfZ: ZS-1147) that the document was written for internal SA use; in fact it was published (with the sub-title 'Adolf Hitler largely to blame') in consecutive issues of the organ of the Stennes fraction (the NSKD), *Wahrheit der Woche,* from No. 7 (Oct 10, 1931) onwards (BA file NS.26/325). – MS history of Berlin politics by an unknown Party member (NA film T581, roll 5; BA file NS.26/133).

199 incompetent: Hitler to Pfeffer, Sep 1, 1930: text of the telegram is in ZS-177, Pfeffer interview, Feb 20, 1968 (IfZ).

201 toying with revolution: Pfeffer, Interview of Oct 25, 1959 (IfZ) claimed that Hitler continued to harbour thoughts of a *coup d'état* until the election victories of 1930.

202 disgruntled: figures from a circular of 8 SA *Standarte* (HA, NSDAP; BA file NS 26/322).

202 Göring disapproved: Bruno Wetzel, quoted by Stennes' chief of staff Jahn (*loc. cit.*).

Chapter 16: The Cleaner

204 phone had rung: one listener was Wilhelm Höttl, who related this to Gerd Heidemann. According to Felix Kersten, Heydrich routinely addressed HH as *Herr Reichsführer.* Streckenbach confirmed to lawyer Dr Carl Düvel that Heydrich had always 'Haltung genommen,' when HH phoned (Interview Fritz Tobias with Düvel, Jun 3, 1985). – In general on Heydrich: see our interview with Heider Heydrich, b. 1934, on Mar 17, 1971, ZS-2452. Documents on Heydrich's funeral, T175 roll 66 frame 2600ff. – Lina's correspondence with HH, US doc. DE424/DIS.202, Jul 17, 1945, and the BDC file on Heydrich. *See* http://www.fpp.co.uk/Heydrich.

204 Ohlendorf: Quoted by Prof. Theo Eschenburg to Prof. Henning Köhler, Jul 10, 1987 (Tobias Collection). –The 'Jewish' ancestry story was convincingly laid to rest by Shlomo Aronson, *Reinhard Heydrich und die Frühgeschichte von Gestapo und SD* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp.63f, but several writers discount

him. The late Karin Flachowsky, whose father was a cousin of Heydrich, took the trouble to look up unresearched records in the DDR (the former East Germany), particularly parish marriage, baptism, and death registers in Saxony. All were intact and untampered-with, and confirm Aronson. Heydrich's father was Richard Bruno Heydrich born Feb 23, 1863 (Aronson wrongly: 1862), his grandfather was Carl Julius Reinhold Heydrich, born Mar 15, 1837, both evangelical-lutheran, *i.e.* Protestant. Flachowsky's study published in *VfZ* Nr. 2/2000 was originally critical of Joachim Fest, but the editors silenced this criticism. See Prof. Klaus J Herrmann, Montreal, to Tobias, Jul 3, 1992 (Tobias Collction).

205 wealthy background: From a note by Lina Heydrich dated Oct 30, 1951. The Konservatorium für Musik und Theater was at No. 20, Gütchenstrasse in Halle: there is a photo in the Vaughan papers (Rasmussen collection).

205 died of pneumonia: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, replying to letter of Nov 24, 1951.

205 naval board: see the reader's letter by Vice-Admiral Gustav Kleikamp, a member of the naval board (*Ehrenrat*) which heard the Heydrich case, *Der Spiegel*, Mar 2, 1950.

205 cashiered: Heydrich CV, in SS-Personalakte (BDC Akte, Heydrich).

205 Hamburg Staffel: Der Reichsführer-SS beim Staatsakt für SS Ogruf. Heydrich in der Neuen Reichskanzlei am 9. Juni 1942 (Vaughan papers).

205 created Röhm's *Sicherheitsdienst*: SA Befehl No. 4, Feb 25, 1931.

205 introduced Heydrich's successor: Der Reichsführer SS bei der Amtseinführung von SS-*Gruppenführer* Dr Kaltenbrunner, Berlin, 30. Januar 1943 (NA, file XE-000440).

206 HH, *Beauftragung*, Aug 10, 1931 (BDC Akte, Heydrich). Abteilung Ic im Oberstand der Reichsführung-SS: such was the formal designation.

206 bloodhound instinct: 'Vermerk über Bespr. mit Thomas Frhr. von Fritsch-Seerhausen, May 29, 1982' (Tobias Collection).

207 hostile crew comrades: Lina Heydrich, *Leben mit einem Kriegsverbrecher* (Pfaffenhofen, 1976), p.30; she was probably not consulted on the title.

207 Jordan complained: BDC Akte, Heydrich. See Shlomo Aronson, *op. cit.*, pp.63f.

207 no coloured or Jewish blood: Dr Gercke, NS Auskunft bureau, Ahnenliste des Oblt.z.See a. D. Reinhardt [*sic*] Tristan Eugen Heydrich, and covering letter, Jun 22, 1932 (BDC Akte, Heydrich).

207 But see *Welt am Sonntag*, Oct 16, 1960. – HH is quoted as saying the opposite: 'Er war davon überzeugt, daß der jüdische Anteil an seinem Blut verdammenswert war, er haßte dieses Blut, das ihm so übel mitspielte. Der Führer konnte sich im Kampf gegen die Juden wirklich keinen besseren

Mann aussuchen als gerade Heydrich. Den Juden gegenüber kannte er kein Mitleid und keine Gnade.' *Welt am Sonntag* gives no source for this unlikely quotation: see Shlomo Aronson, *op. cit*., pp.64-5.

207 more than dubious diaries: Felix Kersten, *Totenkopf und Treue – Heinrich Himmler ohne Uniform* (Hamburg 1952), 'diary' entry for Aug 20, 1942. See especially Flachowsky, *op. cit*.

207 acknowledge acquaintance: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, spring 1951. Copies are now in our possession; Vaughan had proposed a biography of Heydrich, extracted papers and original photos from Lina, but nothing ever appeared; she did not return them.

207 blame the dead: Lina Heydrich, letter to a Dutch journalist (IfZ file ZS-3092). – Heydrich's adjutant 1936 to 1939 was Hans-Hendrik Neumann, (b. Wuppertal, Aug 4, 1910, d. Jun 20, 1994), later the chief executive of Philips, Germany. We used his IMT interrog. on Feb 12, 1948 (IfZ file ZS-1260), and correspondence with Fritz Tobias.

207 journalist: Louis P Lochner to Jean Vaughan, Mar 10, 1951 (Jean Vaughan papers).

208 Moulin-Eckart: born Jan 11, 1900, prosecuted Oct 21, 1934 for providing his apartment to Röhm for homosexual activities, but acquitted (BA file R.22/5006).

208 began service: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Feb 16, 1952, on an affidavit made by Paul Leffler.

208 trash can: Reinhard Heydrich speaking on the Tag der Deutschen Polizei, 1941; and cleaning lady: *Putzfrau* of the Deutsches Reich, and its mid-wife, *Hebamme*. See Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Nov 24, 1951.

208 friendless: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Dec 12, 1951.

Chapter 17: Uniform Black

211 'thingummy': Henry Ashby Turner (*ed*.): *Otto Wagener: Hitler aus nächster Nähe, Noten eines Vertrauten 1929-1932* (Berlin, Ullstein, 1985).

212 for more on the Brown House, see Ulrike Grammbitter's contribution in *Historisches Lexikon Bayerns*, at http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/artikel/artikel_44454 .

212 SS Orders: SS-Befehl Nr. 20 vom 1.12.1930 und Anordnung Hitlers vom 14.Januar 1931, in SA-Befehl Nr. 1 (gleichzeitig für SS) vom 16.1.1931 (BA: NS 19/1934). We have used a file of the original typed SS Befehle in the HL, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, folder 1874, pp.1–84.

213 police reports: Personalakten des Polizei-Präsidiums Berlin. Among other documents, a Report by Munich police headquarters, *Abt. Ia*, to colleagues in Berlin, May 28, answering a request for data on HH on May 16, 1931: in

HL, NSDAP HA, roll 56, file 1353.

213 sponsors and 'friends': see Heinz Höhne, *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf* (Bassermann, 2005), 139f.

213 SS strengths: HH to Ernst Röhm, Oberster SA Führer, im Hause, Oct 2, 1931. Subsequent growth: Korherr report on die Stärke der SS as of Dec 31, 1942; HH initialled the report on Mar 7, 1943 – at about the same time as he read another famous Korherr report (NA film T580 roll 88).

214 Waldeck und Pyrmont, Josias (May 3, 1896 – Nov 30, 1967), heir apparent to the throne of the former Sovereign Principality of Waldeck and Pyrmont.

215 Orders: insurance premiums: SS Befehl A Nr. 31, Jun 9, 1931. – Communist Party: SS Befehl A Nr. 57, Nov 5, 1931.

215 musicians: SS Befehl A Nr. 35, Jul 13, 1931. Schreck became *Leiter der Abteilung Ie Musikwesen im Oberstab des RFSS.*

215 bandolier: Aktennotiz Pers Stab RFSS Nov 16, 1937: Helmut Heiber, *Die Rückseite des Hakenkreuzes: Absonderliches aus den Akten des Dritten Reiches* (München, 1993).

216 Prof. Karl Diebitsch (1899 – 1985) designed the dagger-scabbard of the SS officer. He later initiated art-porcelain manufacture at Porzellan Manufaktur Allach. Robin Lumsden: *A Collector's Guide To: The Allgemeine SS*, Ian Allan Publishing, London, 2001, p.53.

216 modifications to uniform: HH circular, Dec 15, 1939 (in private hands: Henneke collection).

217 boast: The 1929 Hugo Boss advert text read, 'Lieferfirma für NSDAP-Uniformen seit 1924.' *Adressbuch für den Kreis Urach,* 1934/35. (Stadtarchiv Metzingen); *cit.* Elisabeth Timm, 'Hugo Ferdinand Boss (1885–1948) und die Firma Hugo Boss,' in the anthology, *Metzingen Zwangsarbeit*, and see especially the illustration on her p.32. – Hugo Boss died in 1948. It would be unfair to stigmatise him for mass production of military uniforms, but many hands have been wrung over him. See *e.g.* the *NYT*, Aug 15, 1997: 'Hugo Boss Acknowledges Link to "Nazi" Regime.' Few would criticise Messrs. Gieves & Hawkes of Savile Row for tailoring the uniforms of air chief marshals. We prefer the authoritative April 1999 study by Elisabeth Timm cited above, www.metzingen-zwangsarbeit.de/hugo_boss.pdf.

218 Harzburg, Hitler's speech: Dr Werner Best, Erlebnisse mit . . . Adolf Hitler. MS, Copenhagen, 1949. (ZS-207 pt. 2). – Eberstein recalled the train journey to Richard Schulze, Transcript, ca. 1975, ZS-0539, fols. 57–58.

218 HH's letter to his parents is dated Oct 16, 1931; the letters from Marga are dated Oct 10 and Nov 14 and 29, 1931.

219 resonance in the aristocracy: Wolff's reminiscences, in conv. with Gerd Heidemann, Aug 16, 1978.

219 Hesses and Coburgs: see Jonathan Petropoulos, *Royals and the Reich* (Oxford, 2006). King George VI sent Anthony Blunt and Owen Moreshead to the Hesse family at Schloss Kronberg, to 'retrieve' awkward documents.

219 Darré: CCPWE#32 report X-P 21, conv. with a British army officer, Jul 3, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4969); interrog. of Dr Karl Gebhardt, Nov 30, 1946.

220 Baron Evola's lecture: In 1938 HH's P.A., Rudolf Brandt, sent a copy to SS-Brigadeführer 'Weisthor,' whose real name was Karl Maria Wiligut, formerly a Col. in the Austro-Hungarian army, and an expert in Germanic prehistory. Wiligut rewarded HH with a turgid multi-page tract on Aryan duties. It was dated Feb 2, 1938, when HH had matters of greater immediacy on his plate (the Blomberg–Fritsch crisis). It is hard to know how seriously HH took these mystic vapourings.

221 pedigree of a horse: Transcript of Richard Schulze conv. with Eberstein, ca. 1975, ZS-0539, fols. 11-12..

Chapter 18: *Enter Karl Wolff*

222 SS Befehl A Nr. 65 on *Heiratsgenehmigung*, Permission to Marry, HL, NSDAP HA, folder 1874; also BA Berlin, film No. 3331. — Complications did arise: on Feb 24, 1932 HH had to exempt SS men who had already contracted to marry by Jan 8, 1932. All others had to report to the him at least three months before any engagement. He ordered this clarification read out to parades together with the originating order No. 65.

222 Darré diary, Nov 13, 1931.

223 Thirty Years War: HH letter to Private Küchlin, Apr 3, 1940, in Heiber, *Reichsführer!*, No. 62a, p.75; Hoffmann, *Security*, p.47.

223 Emil Maurice: Affidavit sworn on Aug 3, 1993 by Maurice's widow Hedwig Ploetz, provided by Gerd Heidemann. The other documents are in Maurice's BDC file; see also his IfZ interview, Jun 23, 1951 (ZS-270).

225 Stieff: HH in a speech to the gauleiters, Aug 3, 1944, *VfZ*, p.379.

226 uninhibited account: Karl Wolff, 'Meine erste Begegnung mit dem RFSS,' BDC file Wolff (NA film A3345 DS K011 frame 0056ff; BA: NS.19/1074).

226 warbling: John Toland, *The Last 100 Days* (New York, 1996), 30.

226 Dane and Norwegian course participants: in an interview recorded with Heidemann while in Chile, Jun 26, 1979 (transcript, p.30), Wolff recalled their presence as evidence of HH's farsighted planning for Scandinavia.

226 Mongol hordes: IMT interrog. of Wolff, Nov 3, 1947 by Mr Norbert G Barr.

227 Wolff's second thoughts: CSDIC report CMF/X166, Wolff, conversations of May 15–17, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

227 first interrogs. in London: CSDIC report CMF/X166, Wolff, convs. of May

15–17, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

227 turned deaf ears: see the bulky British and American files on CROSSWORD, as it was known, and British attempts to put Wolff on trial.

228 act of treachery: IMT interrog. of Wolff by Mr Norbert G Barr, Dec 16, 1946. The 1961 telegram advising him that Gudrun returns the donation is in Karl Wolff 's private papers, provided by Gerd Heidemann.

228 Kranefuss' suicide: so stated in IMT interrog. of Wolff, Feb 25, 1947, but not proven.

228 paranoia: See *e.g.* the IMT Interrogs. of Wolff by Walter H Rapp on Dec 11 and by Norbert Barr on Dec 11, 1946. Barr described Wolff's paranoia as being similar to Speer's. 'Ich hatte [1943] eine schwere Nierenvereiterung,' said Wolff. 'Himmler hat mir das verheimlicht.'

228 photo of Munich putsch: Wolff in recorded conv. with Gerd Heidemann, Aug 18, 1978.

229 Minsk: see *e.g.*, the evidence produced at his Munich trial, and Wolff interrog. LD1470 on Low Pressure and Low Temperature Experiments in Concentration Camps, WCIU/LDC/1436(a)-APS/HC, *i.e.*, Col Scotland's London District Cage (PRO file WO208/4372).

229 Marga's letters to HH are dated Mar 20, Apr 26, 1932 (HL film).

229 Schwarz: Later, said Wolff under IMT interrog. on Apr 8, 1947, Schwarz put an end to the 'sponsors' as he had never liked the scheme.

230 *Mein Kampf*: Richard Breitman, *op. cit.*, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 13 (1999), pp.90–97. This copy still contains Marga's card.

Chapter 19: The Problem with Röhm

231 'The future of the SA looks grim to me,' wrote Goebbels in his diary on Aug 6, 1931. '§175 [the clause of the penal code on homosexuality] casts its shadow right across it.'

232 According to his Party card, Dr Karl-Günther Heimsoth deceased in July 1934, shot in the Röhm purge. He studied at Rostock, and his PhD thesis was entitled, 'Hetero- und Homophilie,' hetero- and homosexual love.

232 tackled Hitler: IMT interrog. of Maj. Walter Buch, Jul 18, 1945 (ZS-955).

232 Hierl to Hitler, Mar 24, 1932, HL, NSDAP HA, folder 1502; copied to Röhm. It bears no stamps or endorsements, so it may not have been mailed.

232 journalists. Gershon Savitt, 'Hitler up close and personal,' in *Ha'aretz*, Palestine, Jan 28, 1932. See the Master's thesis by Ilana Novetsky-Bendet, of Hebrew University, Jerusalem, excerpted in *Ha'aretz*, Apr 29, 2008.

233 Japanese-like: Selkirk Panton, draft telegram, May 24, 1945 (National Library of Australia, Selkirk Panton papers, MS 5808, folder 41).

233 about thirty members: see George Browder, 'Die Anfänge des SD,' in *VfZ*, 27 (1979), pp. 299-324: here, 301*n*. The author mined BDC personnel files.

234 Affidavit made by Paul Leffler at Kornwestheim on April 24, 1946 (Lina Heydrich papers). Leffler joined the SD on Jun 15, 1932, and from Mar 5, 1933 until his resignation on Mar 31, 1936 he was ranking department chief, becoming senior *Amtschef* of the SD-*Hauptamt* after the SD headquarters moved to Berlin in April 1934. See Shlomo Aronson, *Reinhard Heydrich und die Frühgeschichte von Gestapo und SD* (Stuttgart, 1971). Two early SS organisational plans dated Apr 13 – Jun 17, and Nov 15, 1932 are in HH's files (NA film T175, roll 200, pp.1062–5).

Chapter 20: Torchlight parade

235 Darré diary, Jan 30, 1933

236 'I think,' HH said: '*ich glaube*.' Transcript: Der Reichsführer SS bei der Amtseinführung von SS-Gruppenführer Dr Kaltenbrunner, Berlin, 30. Januar 1943 (NA: XE-000440).

236 Hitler said HH was a pedant like his father: Heinz Linge, *With Hitler to the End* (NewYork, 2009), p.89.

236 plots: Peter Hoffmann, *Security,* pp.23–4.

236 KPD was illegal: Urteil des IV. Strafsenats des Reichsgerichts, Nov 1932.

236 Camp 020, Interim Report in the Case of Heinz Maria Karl Jost, Chief of Amt VI, Jul 9, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/104). 'Heinz Jost is an embittered man with a well-developed persecution complex,' concluded his interrogators.

236 adopted: HH to Frl.Louise Niedermeyer, Jun 8, 1937: from her papers, sold to private collectors.

237 Wolff: CSDIC report CMF/X166, Wolff, in conv. with Eugen Dollmann, May 15–17, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

237 foster son: Gerhard von der Ahé, 1928–2010; Marga's baby diary, *Kindheits–tagebuch*, Mar 10, 1933. Gerhard survived WW2, married Annemarie, and lived and worked in Lübeck for the *Lübecker Nachrichten* until retirement; an expert Skat player, he died peacefully and unnoticed in 2010. Michael Wildt, *Himmler privat*, conceals that Gerhard's father was murdered by the Communists, and writes (p.188) merely 'gestorben', deceased.

237 school: Gerhard's letters are on roll 99 of the NSDAP HA at the HL. And see Marga diary, Jan 30, 1938: 'Behaves very badly;' Mar 27, 1938: 'Is often badly behaved;' Apr 2, 1938: 'Is a criminal by nature;' Jan 4, 1941: 'Gerhard is, as always, lazy and sloppy. Püppi is nice and sweet, always trying to please us. Got a good report card.' Jun 11, 1941: 'With Gerhard, terrible things are happening continuously.' Apr 19, 1941: 'Very bad again,' etc. –

In 1934 Himmler gave the father's name to a unit of 6 *Standarte* in Berlin.

237 Helldorff is the correct spelling: his signature lost the second *f* in a squiggle: 'The people concerned were probably all bumped off on June 30 [1934],' his son was heard saying ten years later, for what that is worth. (*Mein Vater wußte zwar, wer den Reichstag angesteckt hat, aber hatte gar nichts damit zu tun, die Leute werden wahrscheinlich alle am 30. Juni umgebracht worden sein.*') – CSDIC(UK) report SRM.840, conv. of Cpl. von Helldorff with Ltn. Freiwald and Hauptm. Hartdegen, Aug 25, 1944; all had just been taken prisoner in Normandy (PRO file WO.208/4139).

237 reminisced: HH speech Jan 30, 1943 (NA: XE-000440).

239 headed notepaper: see *e.g.*, Himmler to Epp, Jul 20, 1933: in private hands (Henneke).

238 modestly asked: Gerd Heidemann, transcript of recorded interview with Wolff, Aug 16, 1978.

239 Franz Josef Huber: born Apr 2, 1904 in Munich, later SS *Brigadeführer* and *Inspekteur der Sicherheitswache und des SD* for the Vienna region. See the Politische Beurteilung dated Feb 12, 1937 objecting to his proposed promotion (RG 263: CIA Name Files, box 26, BDC file: Franz Josef Huber).

239 Panzinger: born Feb 1, 1903 in Munich, suicide Aug 8, 1959. He would become deputy chief of the Gestapo directorate (*Leitstelle*) in Berlin in 1938 and chief of *Amt* IVA under Müller in May 1944. As an SS *Oberf.* on July 20, 1944, he was on duty at RSHA during the critical hours of the Bomb Plot. To the Americans' dismay a German policeman arrested Panzinger on Aug 8, 1959 in Munich; Panzinger, already depressed by his wife's death in Sep 1958, swallowed cyanide (*Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, Aug 1959). His U.S. and Bavarian handlers were both on leave at the time (RG 263: CIA Name Files, box 99, Friedrich Panzinger).

240 Heinrich Müller, born Apr 28, 1900 in Munich, presumed dead in Berlin May ?1, 1945. A death certificate No. 11,706/45 was issued on December 15, 1945, at the Registrar's Office, Berlin-Mitte; see *Der Spiegel*, Oct 16, 1963 (RG 263, CIA Name Files, box 36: Heinrich Müller, vols. i to iii). See the shrewd archival review of this file by Robert Wolfe and Richard Breitman *et al.*, http://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/rg-263-mueller.html.

240 Reinhard Flesch, 1894–1942, was until 1933 a *Kriminalbeamter* of Bavaria's political police.

240 shrouded in mystery: At Israeli instigation in 1964 Peter Staehle who cooperated, the BND said, with the Mossad, planted a story that Müller was in Albania ('Gestapo Müller lebt in Albanien') in *Stern* magazine in Jan 12, 1964. *Die Zeit* turned it down, declaring the sources fake. He published a follow-up in *Stern* on Aug 16, 1964, entitled: 'Die Spur führt

nach Südamerika.' According to a May 1970 CIA analysis, Müller had been rumoured in the Ruzyně prison (in Prague), and the Czech Foreign Intelligence Director had initiated an 'active measures' operation to plant the story that he was in asylum in Tirana, Albania.

241 Machiavellianism: *Oberregierungsrat* Dr Georg Kießel, 'Das Attentat des 20. Juli 1944 und seine Hintergründe,' Sandbostel, Aug 6, 1945 (TRP, 0533ff).

241 says Eichmann: in his own Argentina MS typescript (Sammlung Irving) and under interrog., *Neue Illustrierte*, Apr 1961 (Tobias Collection).

241 slow poison: Bräutigam MS pt. 3 (IfZ, ZS-400).

241 out of touch: says Kießel, *loc. cit*.

241 Dischner: She survived the war as did their son and daughter, living in Munich.

241 Anna Schmid: Müller wrote, 'Ich trage Dich Tag und Nacht bei meinem Herzen.' Berlin police interrog. of Anna Schmid, Feb 13, 1961. — Landeskriminalamt Baden-Württemberg report, Feb 27, 1961 on a visit to Anna Schmid in Berlin, Feb 6 to 18, 1961 (RG 263, box 36: CIA Name Files, Heinrich Müller).

242 Christian Adolf Scholz: SS-Hauptsturmführer, *Regierungsrat*, Dipl.Ing., geb. Sep 2, 1908; died Berlin, Apr 1945. SD-Hauptamt, Gestapo-Verbindung zu Forschungsamt, Dec 7, 1942. Saß viel mit Müller [zusammen] und 'brachte alles wichtige und heikle Material herüber'.

243 the best have won: Anna Schmid: 'At that time I was amazed at this statement,' she said under 1961 Interrog. 'Only now can I see this remark in its proper context' [*in ihrem inneren Zusammenhang*].

243 speculation: When speculation renewed twenty years after the war, kindled by the apprehension of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina, Walter Lüders (a Volkssturm man and former medical orderly, born Sep 20, 1892) came forward and described how in about August 1945 he identified a body, found near Berlin's former air ministry building, as Müller's; the uniform was well preserved, grey with black tabs, and no medals or decorations, riding breeches with the red stripes of a Gen., the jacket ripped up the back, perhaps by shrapnel; with an SS ID doc. in the inner left breast pocket of the tunic bearing the name of SS *Gruppenführer* Heinrich Müller and a photo, similar to the darkened features of the corpse. But the other items he turned over to the *WASt* were not on *this* body.

243 Müller's effects: These included his 'SS-Führer' ID, SiPo ID, Authority to access offices and pass barricades, Knight's Cross to the Service Cross, bar to Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class. These items – priceless on the world's auction markets now – found their way through the *WASt* to his widow in Munich 'and we believe it highly probable that she still has them.' — The German police authorities displayed little interest in tracing Müller.

244 Müller's medals. Lüders had not been asked to explain how 'valuable medals not found on the body [according to him] were later among the dead man's effects at *WASt*.' See the dossier, 'The Hunt for "Gestapo" Müller,' Oct 1971 (RG 263, box 36: CIA Name Files, Heinrich Müller: vol. 2).

Chapter 21: A Policeman's Lot

245 expecting first child: letter, Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Feb 16, 1952.

245 Wolff on Diels: IMT interrog. of Karl Wolff, Feb 26, 1947 by Norbert Barr. See too Klaus Wallbaum's biography, based on the Fritz Tobias collection: *Der Überläufer. Rudolf Diels (1900-1957), der erste Gestapo-Chef des Hitler-Regimes* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010).

246 The quotations are from Sir Eric Phipps to Sir John Simon, FO, Berlin, Apr 25, 1934 (PRO file FO.371/17705, fol. 347); and Phipps' letter to Orme Sargent, Apr 25, 1934 (PRO file FO.371/17705, fols. 381-5): 'Diels, in spite of his unpleasant calling, is said to be a likeable young fellow (he is only 34) and a word to him has saved more than one political victim from the concentration camp, if not the cat-o'-nine-tails, when approached unofficially.' He remained 'devoted' to Hitler, said Phipps. See Rudolf Diels, *Lucifer ante portas: Von Severing bis Heydrich*, a ghost-written work published in 1950. In 1941 he joined the Donau Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft; he was accused of embezzlement, but never punished, perhaps because later in 1941 he married Ilse Göring, the niece of his protector, Göring: CSDIC(UK) PW Paper 133, by SS *Ogruf.* Otto Ohlendorf, Aug 11, 1945, para. 104 (PRO file WO.208/4716). See too Edward Crankshaw, *Gestapo* (London, 1956).

246 mushrooms: Transcript of HH's speech, 'Der Reichsführer SS bei der Amtseinführung von SS-Gruppenführer Dr Kaltenbrunner, Berlin, 30. Januar 1943' (NA: XE-000440).

246 policeman's lot: Gebhard Himmler, *op. cit.,* Jul 28, 1946; and our interview, of him, Jun 26, 1971 (IfZ file ZS-2257).

246 Angered at the Party's failure to act on these reports, Leffler in Mar 1936 asked Heydrich to relieve him as *Amtschef*, and HH appointed him a *Standartenführer* in the Allgemeine SS, a substantial reduction in rank. Leffler affidavit, Kornwestheim, Apr 24, 1946 (Jean Vaughan papers).

247 card index: see BDC, SSO/ Erich Ehlers, Lebenslauf, and 'Kartei' und 'Vorl. Richtlinien für die Einrichtung einer Verbändekartei,' in the Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden, quoted by Browder, *op. cit.*, 308*n*.

247 Dr Werner Best: Beantwortung [on Oct 1, 1951] des Fragebogens des Gen.staatsanwalts in München vom 18. Juni 1951; and 'Erlebnisse betr. Reinhard Heydrich,' MS, Written in Copenhagen, Oct 1, 1949 (ZS-207/1).

248 Theodor Eicke: Wolff stated (Jun 6, 1947) that Eicke did not meet SS

criteria, which HH overlooked in light of his services before 1933. In May 1934 HH appointed Eicke his first Inspector of concentration camps. Eicke was killed when his Storch was shot down on the eastern front in Feb 1943. See Wolff, SS Verbrechen in den KZs, Mar 22, 1948 (IfZ, ZS-317).

249 Testimony of Friedrich Karl Frhr. von Eberstein, Aug 3–5, 1946: IMT vol. xx, pp.309-370, esp. pp.331-333.

249 Lohse. Trial record and interrog. report on Hinrich Lohse at Camp 032, 032/8/27, May 30, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/5215).

249 Reinecke: Interrog. of Gen. der Infanterie Hermann Reinecke, CCPWE No. 32/DI.49.

250 Red Cross: The ICRC released the reports in the 1980s. They are translated in Jean-Claude Favez, *Une mission impossible? Le CICR, les déportations et les camps de concentration nazis* (Lausanne, 1988).

250 two top British MI6 agents: R H Stevens to Sigismund Payne Best, Jun 23, 1940 (Hoover Institution, Walter L Leschander collection, box 3, file 7). Stevens may have sought better treatment by writing in these terms.

250 Payne Best to R H Stevens Apr 3, 1947: 'The food was, under the circumstances, surprisingly good and no one could complain of any lack of cleanliness. Your guards, with several of whom I am still in contact, kept me very closely informed as to your habits and the conditions of your life and I was surprised to learn of the many advantages which you enjoyed, which were denied to me; painting materials, use of typewriter, boxing gloves and punching ball and your long hours of exercise' (*ibid.*). In 1940 of course, Germany was trying to persuade Britain to abandon the war.

250 Karl Gebhardt: IMT Interrog., Dec 3, 1946.

251 general would sneer: Interrog. of Gen. d. Inf Helmuth Thumm, LXIV. Korps, on Apr 29, 1945 (SAIC/FIU/X/7, Aug 5, 1945: RG 496, HQ USFET, SAIC reports, container #1330).

252 *Forschungsamt*: we have used the OSS dossier on the FA, NA: RG-226 file XE-4986, and Ulrich Kittel, IfZ, ZS-1734. Interrog. of Ferdinand Niemeyer, OSS dossier, *loc. cit.* and the FA reports on pillow-talk: ironically dubbed 'state talks' (*Staatsgespräche*) by the FA civil servants, according to our interview with one of them, Dr Gerhard Neuenhoff. All were recorded by the agency's 'A'-*Stelle* and circulated as Brown Pages. Circulated digests: 'Zur englischen Politik von Münchener Abkommen bis zum Kriegsausbruch' in the files of *Unterstaatssekr.* Woermann (NA film T120 roll 723, pp.3510ff). See too FA intercepts made during the 1938 *Anschluss* (ND: 2949–PS), and during the 1938 Munich crisis (PRO file FO.371/21742).

252 Ilse Hess: 'So, Hochzuverehrender, jetzt habe ich's Ihnen einmal gesagt.' Ilse Hess to HH, Dec 9, 1933, and reply, Apr 7, 1934 (NA film T84, roll 99, pp.1345–6; NA film T175, roll 65, p.1143). And Rudolf Hess private files in

Hindelang, Ordner Nr. 18, 'Hes — Hi', now in safety in the Swiss national archives, Berne.

252 serious gap: CCPWE#32 report DI-36, answers by Göring on the *Forschungsamt*, Jul 7, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/3154). – SHAEF report, Jun 1, 1945, and BAOR report, Jan 2, 1946, in OSS dossier, *loc. cit.*

Chapter 22: A Louse beneath the Fur

253 Gesetz gegen die Neubildung von politischen Parteien, Jul 14, 1933. *RGBl.* I, 1933, p.479.

254 pictorial history: letter SS *Sturmbannf.* Suchsland an Verlag Reimar Hobbing, Berlin, Oct 23, 1933, T175, roll 99, p.1079; Heiber, No. 4.

255 Letter Röhm to HH, Oct 16, 1933: in private hands.

255 strangulation: The condemned man is placed on a sloping board with a noose around his neck, and the board is raised to vertical.

255 outside the law: Leffler affidavit, Kornwestheim, Apr 24, 1946 (Jean Vaughan papers).

255 subservient: Wolff writing in 1952, ZS-317; see in general Heinz Höhne, *Mordsache Röhm* (Hamburg, 1984); and Klaus-Jürgen Müller in *Militär-wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen*, 1961, pp.107ff.

255 Höhler murder: *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, Buenos Aires, Aug 19, 1934: 'Berlin, Anfang Juli: Ein Geheimerlass des Reichsführers der SS', on Carto film #4G. — Carto film: At some time before 2008 the late Willis Carto bought from Moscow some fifty microfilms of captured RSHA documents, which were at that time in Soviet archives; he put us in touch with an American, Ralph Forbes, studying them for him, as he, Carto, was 'computer illiterate.' Forbes found that he did not have a lens suitable for large images, and Carto passed the films to us. We spent two years until Jan 2010 comprehensively listing the contents, and the Carto-numbers of the microfilms are cited here (our computer with the indexing and cover notes, not infrequently in Russian, was later stolen in the USA). Microform Imaging Ltd has digitised all the contents.

257 Croneiss: Irving: *Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe*, op. cit. – Dagger: said former Messerschmitt director Fritz Seiler, interview, Nov 1969.

257 Diels: 'Ich weiss nur,' said Dr Best, 'dass er [Diels] 1933 oder 1934 die SS Uniform trug, darin habe ich ihn gesehen.' IMT interrog. of Dr Best, Sep 19, 1946, ZS-207/1.

257 less squeamish: Niederschrift Rudolf Diels, ca. Oct 1946, aus den privaten Akten Severings: ZS-537 pt. 1, in rebuttal to Gisevius' book, whose author believed Diels dead at the time of its publication; and testimony of Diels in trial of Sepp Dietrich *et al.*, Koblenz, Oct 22, 1953 (both in IfZ archives).

257 Darré: overheard in CCPWE No. 32, X–P6, May 16, 1945.

258 von Fritsch on the Jews: Fritsch to Baroness von Schutzbar, Dec 11, 1938, in John Wheeler-Bennett papers, St Anthony's College, Oxford. Nicholas Reynolds: 'Der Fritsch-Brief vom 11. Dezember 1938,' in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* Jg. 28 Heft 3, München 1980, p.370.

258 populist level: Phipps to Simon, Mar 22, 1945 (PRO file FO.371/17706).

258 banquet: SS *Gruf.* Karl Schreyer, Finanzchef der OSAF (IfZ, ZS-0357). He sat between the British ambassador and military attaché.

259 another wrangle: Phipps, diary, Apr 25, 1934 (Churchill College, PHPP.10/1); and his letter to Sir John Simon, Apr 25, 1934 (PRO file FO.371/17706).

260 Nebe: Kopkow's account of the Plot of Jul 20, 1944; Hugh Trevor-Roper pencils 'invaluable' on it (TRP, pp.0923ff).

260 beyond hope: Heidemann: Interview of Wolff, Aug 18, 1978.

261 Lunch with Ribbentrop and Phipps: Phipps, diary, Jun 7, 1934.

261 Gerth: Milch MS and diary, Jun 4, 1934: 'Midday. Röhm about duel.'

262 Göring's albums in the Library of Congress have many photos of Carin Goring's re-interring at Carinhall on Jun 21, 1934: one (LC-USZ62-13472) confirms HH's presence, seen with Göring, Julius Schaub, Wilhelm Brückner. For the June 10 visit to Carinhall, see also Phipps diary.

262 Bülow: Keitel: prison memoirs, and notes by his son Karl-Heinz Keitel on prison conversations with him on Sep 19 and 23, 1946 (Keitel papers: IfZ, Sammlung Irving); and Heidemann: Interview of Wolff, Aug 18, 1978.

262 Strasser: Testimony of SS *Gruppenführer* Robert Bergmann, Röhm's pers. Chefadjutant, May 14, 1949 (IfZ, ZS-827) and SA *Gruppenführer* Karl Schreyer (IfZ, ZS-357).

262 Rumour has it: Letter, Eduard Wagner to his wife, Jun 21, 1934 (IfZ, Irving collection}; also published in *Der Generalquartiermeister* (Olzog Verlag, München, 1963), p.66.

262 *Forschungsamt*: Letter of Ministerialrat Walther Seifert, director of the FA, to German historian Fritz Tobias on Mar 17, 1977. The FA's Klaus von Klitzing confirmed to us on Jun 8, 1989 that the FA had wiretapped Röhm's conversations. See too BAOR report on the FA, Jan 2, 1946, RG.226, XE-4986. Dr Gerhard Neuenhoff told us that it was FA department head *Regierungsrat* Dr Rudolf Popp who ran surveillance on Röhm. For more, see our *Das Reich hört mit* (Kiel, 1989). Also Erhard Milch MS, 'Persönlichkeiten um Hitler,' Kaufbeuren, Sep 1, 1945, and our interviews of Milch, 1968. Hitler described the intercepts to his Cabinet on Jul 3, 1934: BA R43I/1469.

262 'managers': Darré: overheard in CCPWE No. 32, X–P4, May 14, 1945.

263 offered the post: Wolff, writing in 1952 (ZS-317/1).

263 Lutze: Diary of Victor Lutze, 'beginning with the ill-starred Jun 30, 1934,' handwritten, partially transcribed by Dr Ulrich Cartarius (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung archives, Bonn); part-published by *Frankfurter Rundschau*, May 14–16, 1957 and *Hannoversche Presse*, May 17, 1957. We suspect it was retrospectively written up, from early 1936.

263 Kleist: affidavit by Ewald von Kleist (IfZ, ZS-254).

263 Woyrsch: IMT interrog. of Udo von Woyrsch on Apr 7, 1948; and his letter to Hans Buchheim, Oct 21, 1956 (ZS-1395).

263 Report by Polizeidirektion Nuremberg-Fürth Abt. II sgd. Pol. Oberwachtmeister Knauf, Jun 30, 1934: Carto film SBA#2.

265 Lina recalled: Lina Heydrich MS, sent to Jean Vaughan, ?Mar 7, 1951, a 10-page account translated into English; the German original is not found (Jean Vaughan papers).

265 straight face: Heydrich to Oberste SA-Führung, Jun 24, 1934, rec'd Jul 3, 1934; in private hands (Henneke collection).

265 Dr Best: Beantwortung, *loc. cit.*

265 protestant–Catholic 'enemies of state': His staff listed both in Oct 1934, adding: 'ohne Neuigkeit' – Nothing to report: Sicherheitsamt 2 11/1 (Carto film SBA#2).

265 photographers snapped Göring: *ibid.* (LC albums, image 3128–5).

265 *e.g.* Bayerische Politische Polizei Abt. I 1B (Bergler), to Heydrich, Jun 29, encl. Jun 28, 1934 and about 200 pages of wiretaps. Carto film SBA#2.

266 too late now: affidavit by Kleist, IMT, undated (ZS-254, fols. 1–2).

266 secret air force units: Milch diary, Jun 29–30, 1934; see David Irving, *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe* (London, 1973), note 84.

Chapter 23: Blood on his Hands

267 coming man: Ernst Röhm, *Die Geschichte eines Hochverräters*, Munich 1928); here 1934 edition, p.349. Photos of the events at the Hanslbauer were published by star war-photographer Benno Wundshammer in *Revue*, Munich, Jul 3, 1949.

267 sent for Schreyer: Schreyer, *loc. cit.*

267 Goebbels conflicting: See the Goebbels diaries, quoted in Irving, *Mastermind of the Third Reich* (London, 1996), p. 184.

268 diplomats: Orme Sargent to FO, Jun 27, 1934: FO.371/17707.

268 HH speaking on Oct 11, 1934: NA film T175, roll 89, pp.1536ff. Gen. d. Inf. Kurt Röhricht suggested that Goebbels had fled Berlin to the shelter

of Hitler's 'punitive expedition' in order to escape from Göring and HH: quoted in diary of Kurt Dittmar, Sep 3, 1945 (DJ film 60).

268 rumour-mongers: *Gruppenführer* Wilhelm Sander, Obergruppenbefehl Nr. 25, Jun 28, 1934 (Tobias Collection); Sander was shot two days later.

268 pretext: Testimony of Epp's adjutant, (Maria Joseph) Ferdinand Karl Prinz von Isenburg-Birstein (b. in Birstein, Feb 20 1906, died Regensburg May 5 1968), testimony at Dietrich trial, Jan 3, 1951. He stated the date as Jun 29, but Bergman's 'Jun 28' (May 14, 1949) is more plausible. See Heinz Höhne, *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf* (Weltbild Verlag, Augsburg), 1992.

268 Best: Beantwortung, *loc. cit*.

269 Wittelsbach Palace: says Dr Best.

269 Goebbels ordered police protection for his family: diary, Jul 1, 1934; Irving, *Mastermind*, p. 189.

270 Adolf Wagner: Schreyer, *loc. cit*., underlines Wagner's role.

270 infantry regiment: IMT interrog. of Gen. Max von Viebahn, Jan 28, 1948 (ZS-1557). And so Gen. von Hase told his wife Margarethe: her letter to Prof. H. Krausnick, Oct 10, 1955, and interview with Peter Hoffmann, Mar 31, 1964 (IfZ: ZS-0645). Blomberg intervened to halt the regiment's movement.

270 Sepp Dietrich testimony, Landsberg, Sep 26, 1950 (IfZ, ZS-450). He suggests he went with the train; a different version has Hitler flying him down from Godesberg.

271 You're under arrest: Testimony of Julius Schaub: *Kölnische Rundschau*, May 8, 1957.

271 In the Senate Room: IMT Interrog. of Maj. Walter Buch, May 1 and 16, 1947. Under interrog. on Jul 18, 1945, Buch added that Hitler commented that Röhm had disappointed – he could become quite sentimental when Buch reported sentences against personalities personally known to Hitler.

272 Sembach *et al*.: Wolff writing in 1957 (ZS-317/1); and IMT Interrog. Sep 1, 1946 by Mr Fred Rodell of Udo von Woyrsch (ZS-1395).

272 Mattheiß [Mattheiss]: Dr W Best: Beantwortung.

273 sicked-up pea: Werner Bross, *Gespräche mit Hermann Göring* (Nuremberg, 1946), p. 18; see also IMT pre trial interrog. of Göring, Oct 13, 1945.

274 Hans Frank: U.S. Interrog. of Hans Frank, OI/X-P 26, Sep 12, 1945.

274 Papen: in conv. with a British officer, May 16, 1945 (X-P 6).

275 cabal: Our interview of Milch, Dec. 1, 1968 (ZS-1230); Wolff writing in 1952, (ZS-317/1). Further detail on Jun 30, 1934 in Berlin, from Meissner, interrog., Jul 23, 1945 (OCMH); interrog. of Göring, Oct 13, 1945; Frick interrog., Jul 20, 1945 (OCMH); Darré conversation, May 14, 1945 (X-P 4),

and diary; letter from Renzetti to Mussolini, Jul 13, 1934 (NA film T586, roll 419, pp.9439ff).

275 Viktoria von Dirksen: *née* Laffert, b. 8. Mai 1874 auf Gut Dannenbüttel, Niedersachsen; died 1. Mai 1946 ebenda. President of the Dirksen-Fond-artion, on whose board both Röhm and HH sat.

276 Tenerife: Bross, p.18. Karl Ernst's bride was Minnes Wolff; she was arrested but released from prison on Jul 14, 1934, and lived in Berlin. See too Milch diary, Feb 13 and 25, 1948: conversations with SA *Gruppenführer* Max Jüttner, and Milch MS, 'Hitler and his subordinates.' Göring blamed Ernst for setting up the 'wilde KZ Lager' in 1933. IMT pre trial Interrog., Oct 13, 1945.

278 According to an official death list compiled for the Gestapo fourteen people were shot at Lichterfelde (BA file NS 23/45).

278 staggering: Bross, p. 18. See again Milch diary, Feb 13 and 25, 1948.

276 Kurt Gildisch: Based on his interrogs. on Sep 9, 1949 and Jul 13, 1950, and BDC SSO and RuSHA files: Kurt Gildisch. At Gestapo HQ, lied Gildisch, he heard 'Potzeld' and Behrens discussing Klausener's end, a 'suicide'; he had not heard that name before. He blamed a homosexual, Otto Frey, whom he had upset, for spreading the story that he had shot Klausener. In May 1953 a Berlin court convicted Gildisch for the murder however, denounced by a friend in 1949; already ailing, he served only three years of a fifteen-year sentence.

276 On Schleicher's murder: Theodor Eschenburg paper in *VfZ*, 1953, 71ff, and especially the reports of the district attorney of the Potsdam Assize Court, Tetzlaff, *ibid*. – Henrik Eberle and Matthias Uhl (eds.): *The Hitler Book, The Secret Dossier Prepared for Stalin* (Bergisch Gladbach, 2005); cited hereafter as The Hitler Book. Otto Günsche volunteered to us that he and Heinz Linge had invented fables tailored to Stalin's tastes, from details about Hitler's 'abnormal' relationship with his 'mistress' Eva Braun, to his dependence on Morell's injections, orgies in the Führer bunker in 1945 Berlin, and vilification of Speer as a user of slave labour. The book is sprinkled with names like Alfried Krupp, references to 'colonial' governors and their crimes against communists and 'other progressive Germans'. The book highlights Soviet war victories, and belittles the Allies. Hitler screams, froths, bellows, flies into uncontrolled rages, and every move is a step toward aggression against the East; every reference to the native Soviet population is preceded by 'the peaceful' or 'innocent'. As Günsche intended, it is not hard for the well-tempered scholar to set these passages aside from what is in fact a first-hand source.

276 Blomberg excused it: Sir Eric Phipps, diary, Jul 17, 1934 (Churchill College, PHPP.10/1).

277 *BZ am Mittag*, Berlin, Jun 30, 1934, *Extrablatt*. Its headlines read: 'Durchgreifende Aktion des Führers. Röhm seiner Aemter enthoben und aus Partei und SA ausgestoßen.' The official Party communiqué was signed 'sgd. Adolf Hitler, Oberster Partei- und SA-Führer.'

278 Kirschbaum survived.

278 Gregor Strasser's murder: Others said that Franz A Six was the murderer. CIC Region, III, Frankfurt/Main, report Mar 25, 1948 (RG.319, G.8172121). On Strasser's murder, see Lothar Gruchmann, *VfZ*, 1971, 409f.

278 state fund: *Der Spiegel*, No. 20, 1957, pp.20ff: 'Der Furcht so fern, dem Tod so nah.' The special pension fund was administered by SS *Standartenführer* Franz Breithaupt of HH's staff.

278 relationship with Göring: Rudolf Brandt interrog. on Oct 14, 1946 by Walter H Rapp; and Wolff in conv. with Heidemann, Aug 16, 1978.

278 7,200 calls: Wolff MS, *loc. cit.*, pt. 1.

279 Alvensleben: see Friedrich Glum: *Zwischen Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Politik*, Bonn, 1964, p.456.

280 Moulin-Eckart: Göring interrog. by Shuster, Jul 20, 1945.

279 Bergmann: b. May 5, 1886, Bergmann had carried Röhm, his company commander, to safety – both badly wounded – on Jun 23, 1916. He was in Röhm's supreme command until Jun 15, 1934. Arrested Jun 30, 1934 and held in Stadelheim until Nov 4, 1934, he was cast out of the NSDAP 'because he had not told the Führer of Röhm's high treason.' He was rehabilitated after Nov 1938.

279 Rainer: Wolff writing in 1952, draws attention to these exceptions (ZS-317/1). – Hühnlein: Von Pfeffer und Salomon, writing Feb 20, 1953 (ZS-0177, pt. 2).

280 Goebbels lunched with Hitler: Goebbels diary, Jul 2, 1934.

282 Lutze has become suspicious: Goebbels diary, Jul 18, 1934.

282 Reichskabinettssitzung, Tuesday, Jul 3, 1934: BA: R43I/1469. 'Forty-three' was the figure he now named.

281 Röhm's murder: Darré diary, Jun 30, Jul 1, 1934. *Kölnische Rundschau*, May 8, 1957: Testimony of Bundeswehr Lieut. Col. Walter Kopp, whose unit had guard duties at Stadelheim that day; and of former SS man Wilhelm Nötzel. Eicke would write to HH on Aug 10, 1936 reminding him of 'June 30, 1934, we were given an important task' (NA film T580, roll 88).

281 *Prominente*: testimony in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Lokaltermin im Gefängnis Stadelheim,' May 11, 1957.

281 Wechmar: Goebbels diary, Jul 16, 1934.

280 Wolff wrote: A handwritten letter in Wolff's post-war file, to 'mein

Liebling,' and signed 'Euer Vati', and ending 'ich umarme Euch kleines Frauenzimmerchen in Liebe.' Wolff had one three-year old child at that time, so it is probably to his wife (IfZ, ZS-317).

282 Hitler's fury: Lutze's diary; the testimony of Wilhelm Brückner (affidavits dated May 2, 1949 and Jun 25, 1952; and Julius Schaub MS (IfZ: Irving collection), and an SS officer's report to HH on Lutze's later remarks (NA film T175, roll 3, 1892ff); for a list of 83 victims see T81, roll 80, pp.3456ff). – Ley, 'Thoughts on the Führer,' summer 1945 (NA, RG.238, Robert H Jackson papers).

282 pensions for next of kin: 'I do know that the next of kin of the Jun 30, 1934 victims received a pension, from the state or the Party, just like those of Jul 20.' Interrog. of Udo von Woyrsch on Apr 7, 1948, Oct 21, 1956 (ZS-1395).

282 straits: Werner Best on Heinrich Himmler, Sep 18, 1949 (ZS-207).

282 hullaballoo: Heydrich to Goebbels, Nov 30, 1936 (ZStA Potsdam, Rep 50.01, Diewerge Papers, vol. 994; now BA Berlin, R.55/20994).

283 ambassador: Werner Maser, quoting Minnes Wolff's 'mehrfache Bestätigung'. *Die Aula*, Austria, Jul/Aug 2006.

283 scandalising detail: Phipps to FO, Jul 2, 1934 (PRO file FO.371/17707).

284 head and shoulders: Sepp Dietrich, Vernehmung, May 9, 1950, ZS-450.

284 police release Heydrich in dismay: Fritz Tobias interview with Hans-Hendrik Neumann, Jan 11, 1977 (Tobias Collection). Felix Kersten confirms (p.119) that Heydrich always addressed HH as 'Herr' Reichsführer.

284 Uhl: SS *Sturmführer* Kaspar Schwarzhuber, of 34 *Standarte*, heard Uhl boasting of this shortly before Jun 30. Uhl was among the victims.

284 Thoma: CSDIC(UK) report GRGG.377: Gen. d. Pz Tr von Thoma in conv. with Kpt. z. See Meixner, Aug 26, 1943 (WO.208/4167).

284 paper trails destroyed: Dr Werner Best: Beantwortung, testified that copies were kept by Amt IV (Müller) in Berlin; these have not been found.

284 Helldorff: CSDIC(UK) report SRM.840, conv. of Fahnenjunker Feldwebel von Helldorff with Ltn. Freiwald and Hauptm. Hartdegen, Aug 25, 1944; all had just been taken prisoner in Normandy (PRO file WO.208/4139).

285 HH speech: Werner Best on Heinrich Himmler, Copenhagen, Sep 18, 1949 (ZS-207); and Norbert Barr, IMT interrog. of Karl Wolff, Dec 16, 1946.

285 Leffler: Paul Leffler affidavit (Jean Vaughan papers).

285 Saar: Best (Gestapa III 3b) to Lammers, Jul 17, 1934 (USHMM RSHA Osobiye roll 394); André François-Poncet, the French ambassador at the time, remained taciturn afterwards about his role. He assured us in a letter in the 1970s that France did not conspire with Röhm.

24: In a Blur, like a Movie

286 *Ministerialrat* and *Standartenführer* Rudolf Brandt was one of 23 subsquent defendants at the Doctors' Trial at Nuremberg, Military Tribunal No. 1. Born on Jun 2, 1909, he became HH's *persönlicher Referent* in 1940 and last saw HH on Whit Sunday, May 20, 1945, which he interestingly terms 'one day before Himmler's arrest.' See his trial testimony on Mar 24–26, 1947, and defence documents on NA film M.887, roll 29. I have also used the extensive IMT Interrogs. of Brandt conducted on Aug 18, Oct 14 and 19, and Nov 23, 1946 by Walter H Rapp and on Apr 26, 1947 by Dr Leo Alexander. In American captivity he was manhandled and held in solitary confinement. By Oct 1946 he walked with a limp and had to warm his hands on a radiator before he could sign documents. His letters indicate that he believed his attorney Dr Karl Kauffmann had let him down.

286 sickly: on Brandt as a person, see 21 AGp/DIC/D/CI/16, Interim Report, SS *Standartenführer* Dr Rudolf Brandt, interrogated by Capt. John Raven, CSDIC, Jun 10, 1945 (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR, Investigative Records Repository, personal name files, box 85, XE 000632: Himmler dossier). And see 21 Army Gp interrog. No. 5 of Kaltenbrunner, May 24, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/270).

286 'true' national socialist: Dorle Mähner wrote on Jan 16, 1947 that she had worked in Dr Rudolf Brandt's office from August 1943 to April 1945, and saw in him 'einen Nationalsozialisten in des Wortes ursprünglichster und edelster Bedeutung, für einen guten Deutschen.' See Case I, Final Plea: Dr Kauffmann's closing submissions, p.17.

287 record speed: Affidavit of Reichstag stenographer Dr Gerhard Herrgesell, b. Aug 10, 1918, a schoolfriend of Rudolf Brandt; made on Mar 7, 1947 (NA film M 887, roll 29).

287 more questionable stuff: Hans Buchheim's interviews with August Meine, Jun 25 and 27, 1955 (IfZ, ZS-553).

287 seducer: Case I, p.4911.

288 stood at the table: Affidavit of Dr Benno Martin, Feb 21, 1947 (NA film M 887, roll 29) quoted in Case I at p.4996 and see p.4882.

288 Schellenberg: affidavit, Nuremberg, Feb 7, 1947 (NA film M 887, roll 29). Case I, p.4888; and see the affidavit by Gottlob Berger, Feb 21, 1947, quoted on pp.4994ff.

288 correspondence with mothers: Case I, p.4875.

288 allowed finally to testify: Case I, pp.4913ff.

288 caring Godfather: Case I, pp.4869–80.

289 European community: Brandt's testimony in Case I, pp.4915-8; on secrecy, Case I, p.4971.

290 skulls: Sievers to Brandt, Feb 9, 1942, ND: NO.085. Brandt testified in Case I, p.4898 that he had no idea of who Eichmann was.

290 a cipher: Interrog. of Werner Grothmann, Sep 1, 1946 by Walter H Rapp. Everybody had to go through Brandt to reach HH, said Ernst Kaltenbrunner, in a 12 AGp Interrog., annex IX, Jun 28, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/271).

290 appalled, incomprehensible: Lina Heydrich MS, sent to Jean Vaughan, ?Mar 7, 1951.

291 SA keeps dragging it up: HH, Aktennotiz, FHQu, 15. Nov 1941 (ND: NO-5329).

291 Dollfuss plan: Dr Rudolf Weydenhammer, 'Bericht über die Erhebung der Nationalsozialisten am 25. Juli 1934 in Wien,' written early in 1938 (HL: HA d. NSDAP, box 634, now BA Berlin NS 26/634; IfZ, Fa.88 and ZS-1928). See Hellmuth Auerbach in *VfZ*, 7/2, pp.201ff. Both Habicht and Glass were killed in action on the eastern front in 1944.

291 two known informants: they were SA *Sturmbannführer* Friedrich Hamburger and Rittmeister Leopold Schaller.

292 Dollfuss assassination: Adam's unpublished memoirs (IfZ, ED.1009); Goebbels diaries, Jul 23, 25, 1934, entries first published by us in *The Sunday Times* in July 1992, and in *Mastermind* in 1996. Notwithstanding which, Viennese historian Kurt Bauer claimed unashamed to have discovered the entries in 2011: AFP report, Oct 19, 2011, 'Hitler "personally" planned 1934 putsch in Vienna.' – On the Dollfuss assassination, see Auerbach, *VfZ*, 1964, pp.201ff; and Papen's conv. on May 7, 1945 (CCPWE 32, X-P.3).

293 historical commission: We have used its captured records from the Moscow archives, *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv*, Russian State Military Archive. HH to Heydrich, Apr 25, and HH to Heissmeyer, Apr 25, 1938, in RGVA: USHMM, RG-11.001 M roll 452. See too Gerhard Jagschitz, '25. Juli 1934: Die Nationalsozialisten in Österreich' [www.uibk.ac.at/zeitgeschichte/zis/library/jagschitz.html] in: Rolf Steininger and Michael Gehler (*eds.*), *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert. Ein Studienbuch in zwei Bänden. Von der Monarchie bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Wien – Köln – Weimar 1997), pp.288–306.

294 *Parteigericht:* SD Hauptamt Abt II 2, Vermerk, 'Prozess Schuschnigg,' May 5, 1938; HH to Hess, g.Rs., May 23, 1938; and SS *Oberscharführer* Patzschke, director of the commission, to SS *Sturmbannf.* Dr Franz Six, Jul 16, 1938, and reply; in RGVA: USHMM RG-11.001 M roll 452.

295 'shattering episode': *Standartenführer* Otto Wächter to HH, May 31, and reply, Jun 8, 1938 in files of HH's Pers Stab, IfZ, MA 289.

295 raking over: Heydrich to SS *Sturmbannf.* Bruno Kegel, ca. Dec 1938. (RGVA: USHMM RG-11.001 M: the commission's illustrated report on the Dollfuss assassination is at the end of roll 452, concluding on roll 453.)

The final version of this letter omitted the reference to the Führer, but used the passive voice ('Nachdem entschieden worden ist, daß . . .' etc.). See too Herbert Steiner, *Die Erhebung der österreichischen Nationalsozialisten im Juli 1934. Akten der Historischen Kommission des Reichsführers SS* (Originalausgabe Prag 1965; Wien-Frankfurt/Main-Zürich 1965 and 1984).

295 Party rally: William Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (Baltimore, 1941); here pp.18ff, Sep 5, 1934.

296 HH's salary: see the statement by his adjutant, Assessor a. D. August Meine, to Hans Buchheim, Jun 25, 27, 1955 (IfZ, ZS-553). He saw the pay-slip once by chance.

296 agreeable tenant: Ernst Weingarten to Reichsleiter [*sic*] Heinrich Himmler, Sep 18, 1934 (HL): Weingarten let the property after that to Count Ferdinand Arco-Zinneberg.

296 No. 19 Möhlstrasse was directly opposite the former Munich home of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, where we spent many hours researching in the 1960s aided by the historian Dr Anton Hoch, whom we sorely miss.

296 on the market: A firm, Kagerer & Co, heard of this and inquired the asking price on Sep 11, 1934 (HL, HA, BDC file XIV, Hauptarchiv).

296 Gmund insurance: Deutscher Ring-Versicherungs GmbH to Marga, Oct 6, 1938 (HL). Classifying her as an accomplice (*belastet*) and 'beneficiary,' a Munich tribunal confiscated her other assets, apart from the 48,000 marks she brought into the marriage, *Die Neue Zeitung*, Jan 18, 1953.

296 office in the village: IMT interrog. of Brandt on Sep 4, 1946 by Walter H Rapp.

296 Laur: SAIC/FIR/18, Interrog. on Aug 5, 1945 of SS *Untersturmf.* Johann Laur, born Mar 22, 1893 (NA: RG 496, HQ USFET, SAIC reports. Container #1300).

297 domestic agency: Fragebogen, Hausschwestern-Verein Magdeburg, Name des Arbeitgebers Himmler, Heinrich, etc. (in private hands).

297 Some of the family's albums are in USHMM in Washington DC, others in HL, Stanford, California, archived as #96016, Esther Walker collection. We were asked not to inform Gudrun, in whose estate they legally remain.

The Americans stationed seventeen Red Cross girls in Lindenfycht – HH's family home at St Quirin on Tegernsee. They found his photo albums, books and other mementos still in the shelves. A journalist took away a book of paintings by Gebhard Himmler. Special Agent Lawless of CIC Detachment 303 at Bad Tölz removed a box of books and documents belonging to HH, among them documents on his family history, a pamphlet on ancient runes, a file of his correspondence from April 1934 to January 1936 (his father's last address was noted as being at Lachner

Strasse, 6/21); three wine lists for 1933, 1935 and 1938; a 'Schießkladde Reichssicherheitsdienst' of his police bodyguard, 1938–1939; a file of press clippings kept by his parents on their famous son since 1933; a hunting record book; Marga's address book; a file of correspondence 1918 – 1926; expense- and personnel records for Lindenfycht for 1939 and 1944; a photo album; letters from well wishers on his marriage and the birth of Gudrun in 1929, and files of correspondence dating from the First World War.

The Combined Intelligence Objectives Survey (CIOS) reported on August 5, 1945, that these documents threw light on HH's early life and activities. 'They will be indispensable should anyone ever want to write the real story of Himmler.' CIOS Situation Report No. 243, Aug 5, 1945: 'Private papers from Himmler's House in St Quirin' (PRO file WO.208/4474). Other Himmler memorabilia surface occasionally on the auction block, *e.g.*, of Helmut Weitze Militärische Antiquitäten KG of Hamburg, Germany, who offered in June 2020 a complete set, said to be unworn, of accessories for HH's service tunic (*Dienstrock*) 'from the personal possession of Heinrich Himmler' including collar patches and armband for both black and field grey versions and proof of his right to wear the insignia of the Old Guard.

25: *Beyond the Horizon*

298 President Vladimir Putin made his statement during a visit to the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center: see http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/17-06-2013/124852-putin_jews-0. Vladimir Lenin's sister Anna Ulyanova secretly urged Stalin in 1932 to reveal Lenin's Jewish origins: A 2011 Moscow exhibition revealed a letter written by the sister claiming their maternal grandfather was a Ukrainian Jew; according to his baptismal certificate, Lenin was the grandson of Sril Moiseyevich (Israel Moses) Blank, a native of Zhitomir. Stalin told the sister to keep it quiet. The *Jerusalem Post* printed the facts without fanfare on May 24, 2011: www.jpost.com/jewish-world/jewish-news/lenins-jewish-roots-put-on-display-in-russian-museum; picked up by *Time*, Jun 13, 2011, and finally by the *Jewish Chronicle* in London on Sept 18, 2020, 'Lenin's Jewish roots'.

298 457 of the 556. Sever Plocker: 'Stalin's Jews.' He finds it unacceptable that 'a person will be considered a member of the Jewish people when he does great things, but not . . . when he does amazingly despicable things.' – www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3342999,00.html. He adds: 'We cannot escape the Jewishness of "our hangmen" who served the Red Terror.'

298 four percent: Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1990), p.55*n*.

298 death warrant: Yakov Mikhaylovich Sverdlov, alias Jacob Solomon, the chairman of the Urals Central Executive Committee, had signed it. His

'close associate' was Filipp Isayevich Goloshchekin, another Jew. The killers were Yankel (Jacob) Mikhailovich Yurovsky, a Talmud student, acting with Mikhail Medvedev and Piotr Zacharovitch Ermakov. Ekaterinburg was renamed Sverdlovsk in Sverdlov's honour, whose son Andrei became a NKVD officer, and his niece Ida married Heinrich Yagoda, of the NKVD. Most of the actual killers are still being identified, reported Marina Molodtsova, a senior investigator, to *Izvestia* on Jul 19, 2020.

299 Kaganovich: The Kiev Appellate Court on Jan 13, 2010 posthumously found him guilty of genocide during the Ukrainian famine.

300 the half-Jew Heymann: HH to Pg. Schönbohm, Nov 16, 1935 (in private hands).

300 bury the hatchet: Fritsch, Notes, 1933–1938; now in Moscow, kindly copied for us by the late Lev Bezymenski; we donated copies to the Bundesarchiv; and see Gen. Edgar Röhricht, MS on HH's fight for military power, Mar 1946 (IfZ).

300 Oskar Kauffman: Dr Hans-Dietrich Röhrs to Tobias, Mar 6, 1973 (Tobias collection).

301 Formis and the Black Front: see the US Army Security Agency translation of a paper by Wilhelm Flicke, Chief Evaluator of the OKW Signals Intelligence agency, 'Der Fall Formis' (Naujocks dossier, PRO file KV.2/280). – The transmitter was later exhibited at the Prague Post Office museum.

301 Alfred Naujocks: b. Sep 20, 1911 in Kiel, joined the Party in 1931. He surrendered to US troops on Oct 19, 1944 while attempting to cross the Belgian-German frontier with foreign currency: 'In spite of his robust looks,' wrote the Americans, '[Naujocks] is quite sensitive and cannot be classified as an SS thug.' See 12 Army Gp Interrogs. of Naujocks, Oct 28–31, 1944 and PRO files KV.2/104, and KV.2/279–280. After US interrog. he was transferred to the UK on Nov 2, 1944. Capt. S H Noakes (MI5, B.1.b) for Guy Liddell, Liquidation Report, Nov 1944 (PRO file KV.2/279). – See too Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I*, pp.178-183, and ND: 998–PS and 3061–PS.

302 happiest years: Gebhard Himmler, manuscript, Jul 28, 1946.

303 *Ahnenerbe*: IMT interrog. of Rudolf Brandt on Nov 23, 1946 by Mr Rapp.

303 Fahrenkamp: b. Aachen, Apr 20, 1889; 'suicide' on Sep 21, 1945 near Salzburg. – IMT Interrog. of Luitpold Schallermeier, May 7, 1947 by Norbert G Barr.

303 Fritz A Lenz (1887 – 1976, German geneticist: the source speaks of 'Lens': CSDIC(UK) report SRM.1089 on Leutnant von der Goltz, St./GrenRegt 1039, captured Hoffdplaat/Scheldt, Oct 10, 1944 (PRO file WO 208/4139); possibly Friedrich Frhr. von der Goltz, author of books on eugenics.

303 Lebensborn e.V.: Wolff to Kaltenbrunner, HSSuPf Donau (incl. Wien)

Sep 13, 1939, T175, roll 83, p.8105; Heiber, No. 49.

303 Special Account 'R': IMT interrog. of Paul Baumert on Aug 26, 1947 and on Oct 1, 1947 by Mr Norbert Barr.

303 Lebensborn: IMT interrog. of Rudolf Brandt on Apr 26, 1947 by Dr Alexander.

304 bar-tab: HH to SS *Obersturmbannf.* Schulz, Feb 10, 1935 (in private hands).

304 Helldorff's debts: IMT Interrog. of Luitpold Schallermeier, May 7, 1947 by Mr Norbert Barr.

304 *Jul-Leuchter.* SS Hauptamt circular betr Jul-Leuchter, Nov 20, 1937, on Carto film #4J. A note was entered in each recipient's personnel file.

305 Bartels: Eides. Erklärung of Bartels, for Milit. Gerichtshof IV (IMT).

305 Wewelsburg: Werner Best, statement, Copenhagen, Sep 18, 1949 (Tobias collection). *VB* reported the ceremonial handover on Sep 27, 1934. See Jan Erik Schulte (*ed.*), *Die SS, Himmler und die Wewelsburg* (Paderborn, 2009), and Karl Hüser, *Wewelsburg 1933 bis 1945* (Paderborn 1987). The castle is now a centre for state-subsidised anti-Nazi exhibitions. The first, organised by Hüser, was poorly visited; it was then given a more catchy title: 'Ideologie und Terror der SS' with the aim of minimising 'Nazi' worship: 'In der Ausstellung ist das in teilweise großartiger Art und Weise geglückt,' wrote one reviewer, 'etwa indem ein Ölgemälde Oswald Pohls, des Chefs des SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamtes, nur von der Seite betrachtet werden kann und somit seiner monumentalen Wirkung per se beraubt wird.'

306 Wewelsburg art collection: Maj. Sir Frank Markham, of the MFA & A, 'Report on Collection of Fine Art at Wewelsburg, Westphalia,' handwritten, undated, 1945(?), and report on Himmler's Collection of Loot, May 16, 1945 (IWM, Markham papers). Markham visited the camp and castle on May 14, where Ewald Wettin Müller claimed that his Bible students had rescued the artworks. Markham wrote to his wife on May [17], 1945, 'Three days ago I discovered Himmler's hoard of looted material. . . Dutch masters, Gobelins, carpets etc., in a concentration camp, guarded by those who might (& very nearly did) finish up at Belsen.' – And see CSDIC(UK) report SIR.1540, Gefr. Kruggel, Mar 14, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/3615), and IMT Interrogs. by Norbert Barr of Rudolf Brandt on Sep 4, and Paul Baumert on Sep 16, 1947.

307 heraldry: Wolff to all SS *Ogruf.* and *Gruppenführer,* Apr 3, 1939 (here: Fritz Sauckel), Heiber *op. cit.*, No. 45, NA film T175, roll 49, p.2252). And IMT interrog. of Wolff, Nov 3, 1947 by Norbert Barr.

307 historical research by *Ahnenerbe*: see the much-praised study on Wewelsburg and *Ahnenerbe* by a British author, the late Stuart Russell, and Jost W Schneider: *Heinrich Himmlers Burg. Das weltanschauliche Zentrum der*

SS. Bildchronik der SS-Schule Haus Wewelsburg 1934–1945 (Essen, 1989). Russell studied the location and its history for twenty years.

308 SS-*Brigadeführer* Karl Maria Wiligut ('Weisthor'): Himmler diary, Jan 4, 1937; their correspondence is in BA collection NS.19. Wiligut figures in HH's 1935 diary on Jul 11, Oct 9, Oct 13. His résumé, Berlin-Grunewald May 16, 1937, is in his BDC SS-Personalakte: 'Mich unterrichtete mein Großvater K. Wiligut in der Ur-Runenkunde unserer Sippe.' For his full psychiatric dossier, see Hans-Jürgen Lange, *Weisthor – Karl-Maria Wiligut – Himmlers Rasputin und seine Erben* (Engerda, 1998), See too Karl Hüser, *Wewelsburg* 1933 *bis* 1945, *Eine Dokumentation* (Paderborn, 1987).

308 Wiligut in Berlin: Manfred Lenz interviewed his secretary and confidante, Gabriele Dechend, b. 1908, on Apr 30, 2006. She had published what she knew of Wiligut's 'Runic Key' in the occultist journal *Hagal,* No. 4, 1935.

309 Yrjö von Grönhagen, *Himmlerin salaseura* (Kansankirja, Helsinki 1948), pp.127–129, pp.135-8.

309 Wiligut: Wolff to SS *Personalhauptamt*, Aug 22, 1939. Wolff Papers, in Gerd Heidemann's possession.

309 HH's 1935 diary: Florida collector R C Schneider loaned the original diary to us in 1977; we donated colour photographs of all entries and a transcript to the Bundesarchiv in Berlin, amplified by a digital copy in 2012.

309 'Charlie': Prof. Helmut Krausnick, interview of Charlotte Darré, Aug 31, 1954, ZS-2208.

309 requests: Gebhard Himmler, Sr., to Heinrich, Nov 17, 1934 and reply, Nov 30, 1934 (HL).

310 weight: on Dec 28, 1934 he weighed 175 *Pfund* (193 pounds) in his clothes; on Apr 16, 1935: 177 Pfd. *m. Kleid*; on May 21, 163 Pfd (179·3 pounds) evidently undressed, and on Oct 14, 154 Pfd. so he lost about 9 Pfd; then Dec 12 zu Hause 152 Pfd. and Dec 16 Tegernsee, 153 Pfd. (168·3 pounds). The minimum height for SS men was originally 180 centimetres, reduced to 178 after 1936.

310 HH awarded Deutsches Reichs-Sportabzeichen: CSDIC(UK) report SRM1209, SS-*Standartenführer* Lingner, conv. of Feb 12, 1945 with a V-Mann, stoolpigeon (PRO file WO.208/4474). The certificate is in HL, NSDAP HA, file 369.

310 those not qualified for sports badge. Heydrich, RFSS SD, Befehl für den SD Nr. 56/37, Sep 3, 1937. On Feb 12, 1938 SS *Gruppenführer* Schmitt, Chef der SS-Personalkanzlei, warned: 'Der Reichsführer SS hat ohne Ausnahme alle Beförderungsvorschläge . . . abgelehnt, die nicht im Besitze der befohlenen Sportabzeichen waren, sofern nicht ein ärztliches Attest beigefügt war' (Carto film #6D).

Chapter 26: Pillars of Stone

313 wire jamming: Our interview of Wolf Eberhard, Keitel's adjutant, ZS-2237, and Eberhard diary, Aug 30, 1938 (IfZ, Sammlung Irving). Eberhard's office had previously been Blomberg's. Canaris came 'in full naval dress,' prised up the floorboards, and later swore him to secrecy.

313 Canaris: Himmler diary, Jan 14, 1935. The other three 1935 meetings recorded were social: Mar 26: 'Berlin. Abds b. Canaris'; May 3: '[Büro] Mitt. mit Canaris u. Gästen. M [= Kopfmassage],' and May 22: 'Berlin. Canaris u. Heydrich abds b. uns.'

313 Wilhelm Canaris was born in 1887. The Greek information is from Alexandros Pefanis, Jan 20, 2004.

313 HH's agent: Grossmann (possibly Korvettenkapitän Fritz Grossmann?) to HH, May 21; and Pohl to HH, May 24, 1933 (*ibid*.; BDC file, Oswald Pohl).

313 IMT interrog. of Wolff, Apr 8, 1947: see ZS-317; and testimony of Pohl at IMT, vol. V, pp.555ff. Oswald Pohl was put on trial by the Americans in 1948, exploited for six years, and on hanged Jun 8, 1951.

313 Pohl's ability to bring in the cash: Hans Buchheim's interviews with August Meine, Jun 25, 27, 1955 (IfZ, ZS-553).

313 one Abwehr traitor: quoted in Guy Liddell's diary, Jan 17, 1943 (PRO file KV.4/196). Liddell was a senior officer in MI5.

314 Levantine gent: IMT interrog. of Karl Wolff, Oct 3, 1947 by Mr Barr.

315 accomplished pianist: Helmut Maurer, typescript MS, p.20: 'Vom Krieg zum Mord. Erinnerungen an Admiral Wilhelm Canaris,' the source of much personal detail (IfZ, Sammlung Irving).

315 Heydrich and Canaris: Lina Heydrich MS, Mar 7, 1951 (Jean Vaughan papers): 'I know for sure that if my husband had been living, so close was their friendship, Canaris never would have been hanged'.

316 Glashütte pocket watch: It reached the Hermann Historica auction block in May 2013: 'Sprungdeckel-Taschenuhr in Gold. Mehrfach gemarkt mit Feingehalt "0·585", Krone und Firmenzeichen "Glashütte A. Lange & Söhne". Beide Schließdeckel, der Staubschutzdeckel und das Werk gemarkt mit der Werk-Nr. "99907". Werk bezeichnet mit "Deutsche Uhrenfabrikation Glashütte". Weißes Zifferblatt mit arabischen Ziffern, goldenen Zeigern, kleine Sekunde auf der "6", Herstellerbezeichnung auf der "12". Uhr läuft sehr gut, Gewicht 118 g. Der Sprungdeckel graviert mit "Weihnachten 1935 in herzlicher Freundschaft" und stilisierter Unterschrift Adolf Hitler.'

316 Menzel, Adolph von (1815 – 1905). Vermerke in the Reichskanzlei files BA, R 4311/957; and Film DJ-22.

317 mother's birthday 1935: Anna Himmler to HH, Jan 21, 1935 [HL, NSDAP

HA roll 99 file 9.]

316 cartoon book: *Geheimrat* Gebhard Himmler, Sr., to HH, Jun 4, and reply Jun 14, 1935 (HL).

317 father wrote him: *Geheimrat* Gebhardt Himmler, Sr., to HH, Aug 17 and reply Aug 23, 1935 (HL).

318 power of life and death: HH speech to army generals, May 24, 1944 (NA film T175, roll 94, pp.4609ff).

318 Feldherrnhalle ceremony: HH wrote from Prinz-Albrechtstrasse, promising his father to look into the case of Carl Nachtigall, hoping that Ernstl would see him in Berlin, otherwise he would visit them in Munich. 'Den Brief von Carl Nachtigall habe ich erhalten. Ich werde mich gleich darum bemühen.' (HH to father, Nov 13, 1935: HL, NSDAP HA Roll 9, file 47).

319 'somewhat exhausting': HH to his father, Sep 27 [1935] (HL).

Chapter 27: 'Judea declares War'

321 central records of Heydrich's RSHA: now in the *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv*, Russian State Military Archive, RGVA: partially microfilmed at USHMM, and on our Carto films (see note to p.255).

321 the key events: SS *Oberscharführer* Marmon of I/1 to II/1, Aug 4, 1937, on Carto film #6C.

322 most assimilated: in 1933 there were 505,000 to 525,000 of the Jewish faith (*Glaubensjuden*) in Germany, plus 180,000 assimilated Jews. Data are necessarily obscure as often they themselves cannot agree who is 'a Jew.'

322 'restoration' of the civil service: *RGBl.*, I, 1933, p.175.

322 Neurath on Hitler's remarks about Goebbels: Sir Robert Vansittart to Sir Russell Scott, Sep 25, 1937, *cit. The Daily Telegraph*, London, Sep 24, 2000: 'Hitler worried by extremist views of Goebbels, claimed British official.'

322 June 1935 violence on Kurfürstendamm: a six-page summary by Graf Helldorff, Aug 2, 1935: RGVA 500-1-375, Bl. 106-113. On Carto film #6C.

322 Paul Körner to Gestapa, Jul 26, 1935, on Carto film #6C.

323 antibodies damaging: [Gestapa II/1 B 2 to Körner, Aug 1935, Entwurf. Randvermerk: 'Der Entwurf ist durch die späteren Vorlagen überholt.' (RGVA 500-1-375, Bl. 59-67, on Carto film #6C). 'Wv. C' [show me again, Heydrich] but again no HH *Sichtvermerk*.

323 Jul 30, 1935 conference: Schreiben II/1 B 2 an SS *Gruf.* Heydrich, Berlin, Jul 31, 1935: on Carto film #6C – Götz Aly in his documentation *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945*, vol. 1, identifies this as RGVA 500-1-375, Bl. 51f,

which folio number tallies with our photocopy. Again no HH *Sichtvermerk*.

323 Schacht called a conference: Schacht, *Schnellbriefe*, to Ausw.Amt, Hess, Frick, Göring, SD, and Gestapa, Aug 13 and 15, 1935: On Carto film #6C.

323 Aug 20, 1935 conference: Gestapa: II/1 B 2: 'Bericht über die am 20.8.35 im Reichswirtschaftsministerium stattgehabte Besprechung über die praktische Lösung der Judenfrage.' RGVA 500-1-375, Bl. 86-95. On Carto film #6C. Again no HH Sichtvermerk.

325 Wolff later confirmed: Wolff MS on Behandlung der Juden, Mar 22, 1948 (IfZ, ZS-317) – On the Nuremberg laws: Reich Citizenship Law: *Reichsbürgergesetz* (*RGBl.* I, p.1146), and Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* (*RGBl.* I, pp.1145, 1333). – The SD collected clippings on several consequent prosecutions: *VB*, Feb 6 (Czech Jew Otto Pollitzer); *JTA*, Prague, Mar 14 (British Jew, Erich Wohlgemut); *The Daily Telegraph*, Dec 12, 1936 (Harry Herz, British Jew) - all on Carto film #4C.

325 German public: Otto Dov Kulka: 'Die Nürnberger Rassengesetze und die deutsche Bevölkerung im Lichte geheimer NS-Lage- und Stimmungs–berichte,' in: *VfZ* 32 (1984), pp.602f.

327 Hitler's statesmanlike response: Hess, *Anordnung* Nr. 17/36, Munich, Feb 5, 1936: 'Verhütung von Ausschreitungen aus Anlass der Ermordung des Landesgruppenleiters der Schweiz der NSDAP, Pg [Wilhelm] Gustloff' (BDC file 240/I).

327 Murder in Davos: Emil Ludwig, *Der Mord in Davos* (Amsterdam, 1936), on which see ZStA Potsdam, Rep. 50.01, vol. 998; now BA Berlin, R.55/20998. We consulted the propaganda ministry files on the Frankfurter case and trial in ZStA Potsdam, Rep. 50.01 – vols. 570, 714–15, 994–7, 999, and 1040; now BA Berlin, R.55/20570 – 20140.

327 Emil Ludwig: Goebbels diary, Nov 6, 1936: 'Der Mord in Davos', ein gemeines jüdisches Machwerk . . . Da kann man zum Antisemit werden, wenn man es nicht schon ganz und gar wäre. Diese Judenpest muss ausradiert werden.' – See also *Jüdische Revue*, Jan 1937: 'Die Wahrheit über den Prozess Frankfurter,' on Carto film #6D.

327 who actually needed: *Povijest*: 'David Frankfurter,' article in Croatian, www.povijest.net. Freed in June 1945, Frankfurter left for Palestine; he published a proud article, 'I kill a Nazi Gauleiter. Memoirs of a Jewish Assassin,' in the Israeli journal *Commentary*, No. 9, 1950, pp.133–144. He died in Israel in 1982, where cities and parks are named after him.

327 HH letter to father, Nov 26, 1935: HL, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, roll 9, file 47.

327 Friedrich Hasselbacher, *Hoch- und Landesverrat der Feldlogen im Weltkriege*, published by the Institut zur Erforschung der Freimaurerei,

Berlin and Magdeburg; Nordland Verlag 1935 (*Veröffentlichungen bisher unbekannter Dokumente zur Erforschung der Geheimbünde und volksfeindlicher Bewegungen*, Bd. 1).

327 Dachau prisoner Erber: Anna Himmler to Heinrich, Apr 30, 1936 with green Sichtvermerk, grüner Paraphe 'HH' und rotem Aktenstempel; sold at Hermann Historica auction in Munich, Oct 20, 2006.

328 [Gebhard told us:] Our interview with Gebhard Himmler, Munich, Jun 28, 1971 (IfZ, ZS-2257). On Rascher: Karl Wolff believed he committed suicide, other sources have him hanged at Dachau on Apr 26, 1945 – the camp's last day, ZS-317.

328 Father's burial: Recalled by Dr Heinz Gutsch, a fellow-pupil at Wittelsbach Gymnasium, in *Spiegel*, No. 34/1980, p.167.

329 Daluege: b. Sep 15, 1897 in Kreuzburg, Upper Silesia. See the MI.14 dossier on him, and PRO file WO.208/4444. Interrog. of SS *Oberstgruppenführer* Kurt Daluege by Dr Bohuslav Ečer, Jul 21, 1945 (NA file XE-002394).

329 Willy Suchanek, b. Nov 11, 1905 in Tegernsee; interrog. Feb 2, 1947 (ZS-0527).

330 Fritz Karl Engel, b. Mar 3, 1898, had been discharged from the SS on Jul 4, 1934 at his own request dated Jun 22, 1934. HH to Daluege, Sep 18, 1935 (in private hands).

330 Visit to Italy: Sir Eric Drummond to Eden, Rome, Oct 22, 1936 (PRO file FO.371/ 20417).

332 new KZs opened: Hans Aumeier, British interrog. report, Oct 8, 1945: PRO file WO.208/4661 (Lieut.-Col. Alexander Paterson Scotland Papers).

332 Helmut Hirsch: Hoffmann, *Security*, p. 28. Bowdlerised versions of the case subsequently appeared: *e.g.*, one in *The New York Times*, Jun 5, 1937, datelined Berlin, Jun 4: 'GERMANS EXECUTE HIRSCH, U.S. CITIZEN; YOUTH OF 21 GUILLOTINED DESPITE REPEATED AMERICAN APPEALS TO HITLER FOR CLEMENCY.' Hirsch's journal and contemporary letters are in Brandeis University (Robert D Farber University Archives: Helmut Hirsch collection). Copies of the *geheime Reichssache* file of the People's Court: 'Referat Deutschland: Fall Helmut Hirsch, Mar 18 – Jul 16, 1937,' containing the indictment (*Anklageschrift*), proceedings *in camera* and sentence (*Urteil*), found in Berlin by a Foreign Office team, are in the Wiener Library, London, and the Hirsch Collection, *loc. cit.*

332 Externsteine: HH to Wolff, handwritten, Nov 22, 1936 (in private hands).

332 HH loose calendar pages in Berlin Document Center: Oct 13 – Dec 11, 1936 titled on the first page 'Our vacation in Wiesbaden.' HL, HH file XI: NSDAP Hauptarchiv; and see BA negative 146-1969-056-11.

332 the Saalburg and tally-ho: 'Waidmanns Heil, das ist fein.' HH to SS *Briga-*

deführer Karl Wolff, Nov 26, 1936 (sold at Graf Klenau 1979 auction).

333 Heinrich I and Quedlinburg: HH to SS *Gruf.* Karl Wolff, Jun 23, 1937 (Graf Klenau, 161st/162nd auction, Mar 3, 1979). Eulogy at Quedlinburg: *Rede des Reichsführers der SS im Dom zu Quedlinburg am 2. Juli 1936*, Berlin 1936, pp.16–17. Martin Bormann noted in his diary: '2.7.1936 Feier zum tausendjährigen Todestag Heinrichs I. in Quedlinburg.'

28: *Prime of Life*

334 For HH in 1937, see Michael Wildt in *VfZ*, exploiting the fragmentary HH diary now in the BA. Wildt made however no use there of Marga Himmler's handwritten diary, 1937 – 1945, of which the USHMM provided a copy to us; we have posted an improved transcript and partial translation in www.fpp.co.uk/Himmler/diaries. The quote is her entry of Dec 31, 1937.

334 Dienstwohnung in Dahlem: The Landhaus Dohnensteig. The original drawings for the Haus Herz and plans for its conversion to a fourteen-room Haus Himmler are in the architectural museum of the Technical University of Berlin. See www.architekturmuseum.ub.tu-berlin.de.

334 Gräfin von Wedel: Marga diary, May 24, 1938. SS-*Brigadef.* Wilhelm Graf von Wedel was Polizeipräsident in Potsdam, and chief of the Stapo and SD. His sister Ingeborg was the wife of Graf von Helldorff.

334 *tricoteuses*: our interview of former ambassador Dr Hasso von Etzdorf, Jun 22, 1971, ZS-0322 pt. 2.

334 inspecting Strasbourg: Marga diary, Mar 7, 1941.

335 Wedel's son: SS-*Untersturmf.* Wilhelm Graf von Wedel: killed in action, Jul 1941. See Marga's diary, Jul 15, 1941.

335 Nürnberger Wursttopf: thank-you ltr, HH to Bouhler, Oct 14, 1937, is in private hands.

335 Tukhachevksy: see the postscript to the farewell letter left by Heydrich on Sep 1, 1939 – 'N.B. [Hans-Hendrik] Neumann hat Notizen über meine Arbeit, kennt die schlechten Zeiten und auch manch schöne Anekdote aus unserer Tätigkeit.' *Der Spiegel,* Feb 2, 1950.

335 Behrend looked around: Dr Hermann Behrends, b. May 11, 1907, was executed on Dec 20/21, 1947 by firing squad in Yugoslavia. Hans-Hendrik Neumann, Heydrich's adjutant, confirms (interview with Tobias, Jan 7, 1977) it was a Heydrich Täuschungsaktion.

337 transfer her husband: HH to Anna Kremer, Mar 12, 1937, HL: NSDAP HA, roll 98, file 1.

337 addressing staff officers: English text only ('Himmler Quotations'), in an appendix to 'Nazis in the News, Heinrich Himmler,' May 25, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

337 HH spoke to police and gauleiters on homosexuality: Goebbels diary, Jan 17 and Jun 3, 1937.

337 'heartily embraced': HH to SS *Standartenf.* Peter Hansen, the author of the book, Mar 15, 1940, NA film T175, roll 48, p.0815f; Heiber, No. 61.

337 SS *OberSturmbannf.* Bender to Hauptamt SS Gericht, Oct 26, 1943, IfZ Fa 146/0072; Heiber, No. 278.

337 'Brachmond': SS *Sturmbannf.* Suchsland to Prof. Dr Hans Hahne, Oct 24, 1933, T175, roll 99, p.1105.

338 Yule candles: HH an SSHA und RuSHA, Nov 16, 1937; IfZ Fa. 127, p.351f; Heiber, No. 20.

338 carols: Brandt to SS *Obersturmbannf.* Kurt Ellersiek, Nov 8, 1938; NA film T175, roll 47, p.0018; Heiber, No. 42.

338 Ribbentrop: see SHAEF Interrog. of Albert Speer, 7th session, part ii, Jun 1, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/5205).

338 Sir Nevile Henderson to Sir Orme Sargent, Jun 16, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/23020).

338 Himmler in Rome: Lord Perth to Eden, Oct 20, 1937 (PRO file FO.371/21176).

339 Dollmann on Bocchini and Italy: Interrog. of SS *Oberf.* Eugen Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

339 Ward Price on HH: British ambassador in Rome to Eden, Oct 20, 1937 (PRO file FO.371/21176).

29: The Wife's Diary

340 Marga diary, Dec 19–29, 1937.

341 Marga diary: putting on weight – 144 pounds (Mar 21, 1938); learns English (Jan 20, 1938); alcohol, tea (Dec 30, 1939; Nov 7, 1940); Gudrun bad at dictation (Jan 26, 1938).

341 Gerhard von der Ahé: Marga diary, Jan 30, Apr 2 and 4, 1938; Jun 11, 1941. Wulf Dieter Burwitz says he was not formally *adopted*, but fostered by the Himmlers.

342 Lina fell foul: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Mar 7, and Dec 1951 (Jean Vaughan papers).

342 Italy and North Africa: Marga diary, Nov 14 – Dec 14, 1937.

342 Himmler in Italy: Interrog. of SS *Oberf.* Eugen Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57 (PRO file WO.208/4474); and Heidemann: Transcript of Interview with Dollmann, Aug 31, 1978. – Brandt also recalled a visit by HH, taking Daluege, Frhr. von Hadeln, and Wolff: AGp/DIC/D/CI/16, Interim Report, SS *Standartenf.* Dr Rudolf Brandt, interrogated by Capt. John Raven, CSDIC, BLA, Jun 10, 1945 (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR

[the CIC files], personal name files, box 85, XE 000632: Himmler dossier).

344 Finds in Palermo: Interrog. of SS *Oberf.* Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57; in this, Dollmann stated that Bocchini 'considered' the ruse. He told Heidemann they had done it (interview with Dollmann, Aug 31, 1978).

344 Bocchini died aged sixty on Nov 20, 1940. Bocchini's widow continued to ply HH with oranges from Calabria; see Maria Gabrielle Bocchini to HH, Jun 4 and reply Jul 7, 1941: Heiber No. 79a, b; NA film T175 roll 43, pp.4453, 4451.

344 Alaric the Goth: see Daniel Costas, *The Lost Gold of Rome: The Hunt for Alaric's Treasure* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2007).

346 Ludendorff funeral: transcript of our interview of *Konteradm.* Karl-Jesco von Puttkamer, Apr 2, 1967; Göring had filled in details to Puttkamer during the Ardennes campaign, 1944 (IfZ, ZS-0285, pt. 2).

366 Did Himmler believe: HH filed this extract, headed in typescript, 'From a letter of the Führer's deputy [Rudolf Hess], Jan 16, 1938', endorsed by HH in green crayon: 'Worte des Führers' (Rendell Museum, Boston).

30: *Cavalcade*

348 Marga diary, Jan 18, 1938.

349 Sonthofen: Gen. Alfred Jodl's diary on Jan 21, 1938 stated, 'Am Schluß des nationalpolitischen Lehrgangs spricht der Führer 2½ Stunden vor den Generalen über seine Auffassungen von Geschichte, Politik, Volk u. dessen Einheit, Religion u. Zukunft des deutschen Volkes.'

349 security was thin. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* announced Jan 21, 1938, that HH would arrive at Kiel railroad station 'at 8:49 a.m. with the regular train from Berlin'.

349 Dr Werner Best was questioned by Foertsch of the IfZ, Sep 13, 1952.

350 denied having known: 'Himmler und Heydrich haben erst nachträglich von der ganzen Angelegenheit Blomberg–Gruhn erfahren.' Gen. Hermann Foertsch interview with Karl Wolff, Aug 11, 1952 (IfZ, ZS-317). Heydrich's adjutant Hans-Hendrik Neumann agreed that neither Heydrich nor HH knew – he added that Heydrich was much 'cleverer' than the Reichsführer; Heinrich Müller said the same to Huppenkothen. HH assured Rosenberg on Jan 28, 1938, he had absolutely no connection with either affair. Gen. von Vormann described how Heydrich sitting next to him on the evening of Aug 25, 1939, 'mir wohl 2 Stunden lang seine völlige Unbeteiligtheit und Unschuld in der Affäre des Generalobersten Freiherrn v. Fritsch 1938 auseinandersetzte.' (Vormann MS: memoirs, IfZ file F 34, fol. 31).

350 tuberculosis cure: HH to Gebhardt, Hohenlychen, Jan 14, 1938: NA film T175, roll 40, p.1127; Heiber No. 22. ; IMT interrog. of Dr Karl Gebhardt, Oct 17, 1946, and pre trial interrog., Oct 17, 1946. IfZ, ZS-706)

350 Helldorff saw Keitel: diary of Wolf Eberhard, Keitel's adjutant, Jan 21, 1938 (Sammlung Irving, DI-74).

350 the police file on Eva Gruhn, is No. 7079 in the archives of the Berlin public prosecutor. It contains the testimonies of Heinrich Löwinger (a Jew and Czech citizen who was forty-one when the questionable photos were taken at Christmas 1932) and of the Polish photographer Ernst Mikler, but no evidence of morals charges or that Erna Gruhn had a criminal record.

350 massage parlour: see the *Berliner Adressenbuch* 1935: 'Luise Gruhn, staatl. gepr. Heilgeh., Neukölln, Emser Str. 40.' And *ibid*., 1942: 'Luise Gruhn, Masseurin,' and *ibid*., 1943: 'Luise Gruhn, Masseurin.' Erna von Blomberg (1913–1978), rewarded her husband with absolute loyalty until the end; he died of an untreated cancer in American captivity at Nuremberg in Mar 1946 and was buried in an unmarked grave. In 1970 we visited her apartment in Berlin, but she declined to be interviewed.

350 Löwinger was hauled back: so Göring told Puttkamer in 1944. Interviews, *ibid*., Apr 2, 1967 and Oct 27, 1971.

351 Dr Best confirmed to Tobias that no FA 'Brown Pages' or letter censorship reports crossed his desk relating to Fritsch.

351 married a hooker: Siewert quoted this to Hans-Hendrik Neumann, Jan 30, 1977 (Tobias Collection).

351 at Hitler's lunch table: Goebbels diary, Jan 26-28, 1938; cf. *Mastermind*, pp. 239-242.

351 oozes sterility: Goebbels diary, Nov 14, 1937.

351 Fritsch not averse: In confidential handwritten notes removed to Moscow in 1945, and copied to us by Lev Besymenski and by us to the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Fritsch denied any ambition to succeed Blomberg: 'I would have refused such an appointment since, in view of the Party's attitude to me, the obstacles would have been insuperable.'

351 endemic rottenness: HH speech, Aug 3, 1944, p.366.

351 decent and totally loyal: *loc. cit.,* p.366.

351 SS-*Osturmbannf.* Josef Albert Meisinger, b. Sep 14, 1899, executed Mar 7, 1947 in Warsaw.

352 Fritsch handwritten notes. Soviet troops removed these Feb – Sep 27, 1938 from the Potsdam army archives to Moscow. Lev Besymenski kindly provided copies to us; we have deposited transcripts in the BA (Nachlass Fritsch, N.33/22), and the IfZ (Sammlung Irving). Fritsch's adjutant Col. Otto-Heinz Grosskreutz confirmed their authenticity to us. To reconstruct the chronology we also used the diaries of Keitel's adjutant Wolf Eberhard (our film DJ-74), Jodl (DJ-84), and Milch (DJ-57). See David Irving, *Göring, a Biography* for further sources.

On Apr 9, 1939 von Fritsch brooded further: "It was in the spring of 1936, that Himmler furnished to the Führer the dossier claiming I had been blackmailed. Perhaps that's why the Führer withdrew his agreement to becoming Colonel. His later explanation that the Party would never understand his becoming Colonel of a regiment wasn't very likely, or at least not acceptable. The following is also possible: Himmler finds out that the Führer wants to become Colonel of IR9; he fears this may strengthen the army's influence even more. This he wants to thwart. When he hears of the case of the cavalry captain, *von Frisch*, he alters it to my name and pressures the blackmailer to testify accordingly. That rascal Himmler is absolutely capable of such a deed.'

353 Heydrich pretty angry: Tobias, note on conv. with Hans-Hendrik Neumann, Jan 11, 1977; Tobias to Dr Werner Best, Jan 14, 1977 (Tobias Collection).

355 one man's word: Goebbels diary, Jan 30, 1938.

355 Fritsch interrogated: The 83-page 'Protokoll der Vernehmung des Generaloberst Fritsch durch Min. Dir. Dr Best und Reg. Rat Dr Huber,' dated probably on Jan 27, 1938 as Fritsch refers to his confrontation with the Führer 'gestern' (NA film T82, roll 272, pp.0536ff; and BA N.33/7). We also used Fritsch's notes and Goebbels diary, Jan 27 and 29, 1938.

356 spun this version: CSDIC/CMF/X report 189, Karl Wolff in conv. with Gen. d. Lw. Pohl and Leyers, Jul 7–11, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4517).

356 honour among thieves: Dr Werner Best questioned by Gen. Hermann Foertsch of Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Sep 13, 1952.

357 a bitter pill: our interview of Hitler's naval adjutant von Puttkamer, Nov 26, 1970 (ZS-0285, pt. 3)

358 Himmler nervy: Marga diary, Feb 5, 1938.

358 Admiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg to HH, Aug 31, 1944 (BA file NS.19/1222). With a Jewish grandmother he was shielded by HH.

358 flagged toward the end: Marga diary, Feb 16, 1938.

359 Tauschitz: the SD captured his official despatches in 1938. See AA Serial 2935 (NA: T120, rolls 1447 to 1449).

359 loathed Goebbels: Goebbels diary, Dec 11, 1937, Feb 23, Mar 1, 1938.

360 Heissmeyer: b. Jan 11, 1897, became CEO of the West German Coca-Cola bottling plant after WW2, and died Jan 1979. In the Auschwitz trial a witness testified that he had accompanied one 'SB' (*Sonderbehandlung*) train to Auschwitz, and gave the orders.

360 slaughtered a pig: Marga diary, Mar 3, 1938.

360 Rüdiger von der Goltz. See his papers in BA: Kl.Erw.653/3 and SAIC/13.

360 Heitz: IMT interrog. of Gen. Max Viebahn, Jan 28, 1948, ZS-1557. Viebahn was deputising for Keitel during the Fritsch investigation. Gen. der Artillerie Walter Heitz (b. Dec 1878) died in action Feb 1944 in Russia.

361 stiff upper lip: Marga diary, Mar 5, 1938.

361 Stumpff: quoted in Milch diary, Mar 7, 1938.

362 with the pride of a layman: Dr Werner Best questioned by Gen. Hermann Foertsch of IfZ, Sep 13, 1952.

362 poor light on the Gestapo: Goebbels diary, Mar 1, 1938.

363 terrible put-down: Goebbels diary, Mar 17, Jun 15, Aug 23, 1938.

364 Otto Schmidt, a schizophrenic: born Aug 16, 1906 in Berlin; executed Oct 30, 1942 in Sachsenhausen.

364 eye-witness: Ivo-Thilo von Trotha, unpubl. memoirs, Feb 19, 1946 (Irving collection).

364 Fritsch state funeral: See William Shirer, *Berlin Diary*, entry for Sep 26 1939. Himmler diary, Sep 26, 1939: 'Lauenburg – Berlin, Ankunft 17:30. Zu Hause.'

364 picture of God: Auszug aus einem Schreiben des Stabsleiters des Stellvertreters des Führer, Jan 26, 1938. Marked by HH, 'Worte d. Führers' (Rendell Museum, Boston, Massachusetts). – On HH and religion: Interrog. of Mrs Himmler and daughter, May 24, 1945 CSDIC/200/MU/15/X-22 (PRO file WO.208/12603). The Rome newspaper *Il Giornale del Mattino*, Jul 4, 1945, also published an interview in Cine Città of both by UP writer Ann Stringer (PRO file WO.208/12603). – Burwitz to Fraenkel, Jan 25, 1967 (Univ. of New Mexico, Heinrich Fraenkel papers). – Schoolfriend Catherine Leber, interviewed by Fraenkel (UNM). – Interrog. of Frau Anni Winter, Nov 6, 1945 (Sammlung Irving).

31: *No More Mr Nice Guy*

366 Keppler: See Note von Weizsäckers v. 13.7. 1937, publ. in *ADAP* (D), vol. ii, Nr. 241; and Schr. SS *Gruf.* Wilhelm Keppler an SS-Personalkanzlei, Jul 15, 1937 in BDC file: Wilhelm Keppler.

366 with bands playing: Our interviews with Keitel's adjutant at the time, Luftwaffe Maj. Wolf Eberhard, Dec 20, 1969, and Oct 15, 1971, ZS-2237.

367 police cordon round the printing works: Goebbels diary, May 7, 10, 11, 1938, Irving, *Mastermind*, pp.242–3.

367 arrest lists: Aktennotiz Knochen, II/1, Berlin, Mar 11, 1938 (Carto film #6D).

367 phone booth: the *Forschungsamt* transcripts of these days are ND: 2949–PS, and see Göring's IMT interrog. on Oct 1, 1945.

368 Winter Ball: Hugh R Wilson to FDR, Mar 12, 1938, in FDR Libr., PSF box 45. And Himmler diary, Mar 11, 1938.

368 Himmler lands in Vienna: see the army journal *Die Wehrmacht,* Mar 21, 1938: 'Der Husarenstreich [daring ploy] des RFSS.' – HH's SS Einsatzbefehl dated Mar 12, 1938 (ZStA Potsdam, film No. 14464).

369 deleted from the newsreels: Memo from Gordon Dean to R H Jackson, W B Donovan, J Amen *et al*., re: 'Photographic Evidence,' Nov 18, 1945 (NA, RG.238, US Chief of Counsel at Nuremberg, Main Office files, box 213). The films were doctored to remove the scenes, 'In all of which flagwaving, smiling faces and the presentation of flowers help to nullify our notion that by these acts these people were planning or waging a war against their neighbours.'

369 fired Skubl: see Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, *Ein General im Zwielicht* (Wien, 1983), p.266; and Skubl's testimony in the *Guido-Schmidt-Prozeß*, p.327.

370 slogan *Ein Volk – Ein Reich – Ein Führer!* Marga diary, Aug 16, 1939. He also coined the word *Wehrbauer*, the armed settlers who would man the outposts of the new Reich.

370 can't help admiring: Willi Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends. Tagebuch vom Untergang des Breslauer Judentums 1933–1941 (*Böhlau, 2006*)*; and Marga diary, Mar 13, 1938.

371 marching in: Marga diary, Mar 13, 1938.

372 Gebhardt: Karl Wolff, affidavit, Mar 17, 1947: Harvard Law School Library, No. 406; and IMT Interrogs. of Dr Karl Gebhardt, Oct 17 and 27, 1946, and ZS-706. 'Ich hatte zu betreuen Himmler, Lammers, Ribbentrop.'

372 clasped finger and thumb: Keitel's adjutant Eberhard told us he witnessed this (ZS-2237).

372 Czechoslovakia next: Goebbels diary, Mar 20, 1938.

373 *Die Wehrmacht*: Marga diary, Mar 21, 1938.

373 Himmler's plane: *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, Mar 23, 1938 wrongly named his Ju 52 'Kissenberg.' Otto Kissenberth (1893–1919) had commanded Jagdstaffel 19 and 23, and was credited with nineteen victories, latterly flying a captured RAF Sopwith Camel. HH sent his Ju52 D-APAA into Berlin on Apr 28, 1945 to collect the doomed Hermann Fegelein; Hanna Reitsch saw it on the makeshift 'runway' on Unter den Linden by the Brandenburg gate that day.

374 Hitler on Gestapo: Table Talk, May 3, 1942, midday; Hoffmann, *Security*, p.61.

374 dismissed her manservant: Marga diary, Apr 1–2, 1938.

376 Schmundt's: at our request the US National Archives microfilmed

Schmundt's original FALL GRÜN file (ND: 388-PS) for their film T77/1810.

377 one word, revenge: see Otto Strasser's letter of thanks Apr 6, 1938, to the Zürich journalist Fritz Heberlein who gave him shelter at the request of Swiss Intelligence officer Hausmann. 'In diesen schweren Jahren ist es wirklich die einzige Freude, Menschen zu treffen, die nicht nur Verständnis mit dem Kopf, sondern auch mit dem Herzen aufbringen u. beweisen' (in private hands).

377 Mr Nice Guy: Goebbels speaking to Hitler on Apr 27, 1945. See Heinz Lorenz's shorthand notes, first published in *Der Spiegel*, Jan 10, 1966; we authenticated them with Lorenz. See his CSDIC(WEA) Interrog., Nov 30, 1945 (Trevor-Roper Papers).

32: *Eichmann Cuts the Red Tape*

378 SD cross-referencing: SD Hauptamt, 80.001 to Sicherheitshauptamt (SHA) RFSS, Abt. II 1, May 6, 1936, Carto film #6D.

378 Jews overseas: Adolf Eichmann, memoirs ('Götze'), fol. 78. [Leopold Itz, Edler von Mildenstein (30 November 1902 – November 1968). Eichmann's dates are often wrong, and he discreetly suppresses names like Franz Stahlecker and Feivel Polkes in his writings. He wrote memoirs again while in illegal Israeli captivity. These were held secret by Israel until April 2000 when Israel foolishly provided them to help the defence team in the High Court action we brought against the scholar Deborah Lipstadt. Under the Rules of the Supreme Court, the High Court was obliged to order the memoirs immediately released to us – despite the protests of her defence.

378 treachery by Jews: Correspondence Reichsrechtsamt of the NSDAP with Gestapa Sicherheitshauptamt RFSS Zentralabteilung II/1 A2, Apr – May, 1936 (Carto film SBA#2).

379 *Die Wahrheit*: intercepted letter from Rothschild bank to *Die Wahrheit*, Mar 12, 1936: in SHA Zentralabteilung II, Carto film #5D.

379 Berlin Jewish statistics: The figures did not include the racial Jews, those not professing the Jewish religion: *Berliner Tageblatt*, Jul 2, 1937.

379 adultery: literally, 'ausgenommen die Frau Andersgläubiger.' Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, SHA RFSS, Zentralabteilung II/1 120 to II B 4, Berlin, citing *Tract Sanhedrin VII*, iii, fol. 52b: Lazarus Goldschmidt (transl.), *Babylonischer Talmud*, Jüdischer Verlag (Berlin, 1933), Carto film #6C.

379 *Der Stürmer*: Ltr. from Gestapa, II.P.1.–165/B sgd. Müller, an alle Staatspolizeileit- und Staatspolizeistellen, Apr 24, 1937 (Freniere: KGB archive). In general on the criminality statistics see SHA RFSS Zentralabteilung II documents, Carto film #5D.

379 Assimilationists and Zionists: see SHA Hauptamt Abt II/112 0: 'Jüdische

Organisationen in Deutschland,' undated, but the accompanying map, Politische Gliederung der Juden in Deutschland, is dated May 1, 1935, Carto film #6D. On the Central-Verein (CV): SHA Hauptamt Abt II/113 to SD Führer des SS Oberabschnitt Süd-West, Stuttgart, May 7, 1938, Carto film #6B.

380 Leopold Amery, a British Cabinet minister, father of the traitor John Amery, changed his middle name from Moritz to Maurice and kept his Jewish origins secret throughout his life. His mother was a Hungarian Jewess, Elisabeth Saphir. See Prof. William Rubinstein, 'The secret of Leopold Amery,' *Historical Research*, vol. 73, no. 181 (Jun 2000), pp.175–196.

380 an ageing population: 'Gesamtüberblick über die Judenfrage im Reichsmaßstab,' undated, post-1937 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 603).

380 Jewish statistics in the Reich: SD-Hauptamt Abt II 112 *Regierungsassessor* Horst Freytag to HH, betr. 'Judenpolitik,' Mar 24, 1938. USHMM RSHA roll 7. (Horst Freytag, b. Mar 28, 1906 in Adamsheide/Osterode, since 1936 employed at Gestapo HQ in Berlin.) Another document, '*Auswanderung*,' fol. 146 *et seq*. in the same file, gives the number of those of the Jewish confession on Jan 1, 1938 in Germany (the Old Reich) as approximately 370,000. '*Auswanderung*' gives the figure in Mar 1938 as approximately 185,000, amended in handwriting to 'Zahl der Juden am 1. Januar 1938 laut staatliches Jahrbuch 1938 191,000.' The American Jewish Committee published similar statistics for the Jewish populations in 1938: Austria 191,408, and Germany 240,000 – with Poland adding 3,113,900 more. – Recorded on Carto film #5C are RSHA files showing a growing interest in Jewish migration into the cities, comparative criminality; their preferred trades and professions; and an on-going controversy on their representation in the ranks in the Great War. A 1937 document gives a figure of 27,515; of the 906,625 German Army (Groß-Heer) deaths in action listed by Nov 1, 1916, 3,411 (or one third of one percent) were Jews.

380 precious pawn: SD-Hauptamt Abt. II Regierungsassessor Horst Freytag an HH, betr. 'Judenpolitik,' Mar 1938. [SD Hauptamt Abt II/112/3, Vermerk, sgd. Dan, Jun 2, 1938, *ibid*. Freytag's paper came back to the SD Hauptamt on Jun 2, initialled by HH and Heydrich but 'without comment.' USHMM RSHA roll 7.

381 language book: Samuel Kaleko, *Hebräisch für jedermann* (Verlag *Jüdische Rundschau*), with the 1,500 most important words in Hebrew.

381 Hagen, b. Sep 20, 1913, died Aug 7, 1999 in Rüthen, Germany. On the visit by Feivel Polkes, b. 1900: report by SS *Sturmbannf*. Dr Franz Six, Jun 17, 1937: T175, roll 411, pp.6189 *et seq*. Israel has refused to release the Haganah file on Polkes. – 'Bericht über die Palästina-Ägyptenreise von

SS *Hauptscharführer* Eichmann und SS *Oberscharführer* Herbert Martin Hagen,' Nov 4, 1937 (IfZ, Eichmannprozess, Beweisdokumente).

382 Eichmann in Middle-East: [Wim Sassen:] 'Eichmann Tells His Own Damning Story,' *Life*, Nov 28, 1960, p.22; and our own Eichmann MS.

382 Jewish leaders collaborating with Eichmann: Eichmann MS, ca. 1957, in our possession. On Oct 20, 1991 in Buenos Aires, a packet was handed to us containing 426 pp., roughly 'legal' size, of unsigned typed manuscript from the late Adolf Eichmann's hand. We donated them shortly after to the German Federal Archives, the Bundesarchiv, in Koblenz.

382 Globočnik and Hitler arm in arm: Glaise von Horstenau, *General im Zwielicht*, p.266.]

381 Globočnik: Globočnik to Karl Gerland, Apr 1, 1938 (in private hands). Odilo Globočnik, b. Trieste, Apr 21, 1904, met an undocumented end on May 31, 1945: see Berndt Rieger, *Creator of Nazi Death Camps, The Life of Odilo Globočnik* (London, 2007).

383 Eichmann blamed the worst delays: Eichmann to *Sicherheitshauptamt* II/112, Sep 14, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 625).

383 *Forschungsamt* intercept: Ambassador Hugh Wilson to US State Dept., Aug 23; FA *Vertrauliche Meldung* N.95,308, Aug 24; RFSS *Sicherheitsdienst* II/112, Vermerk, Aug 30; and FS SD Hauptamt Aug 25, 1938, *ibid*. Wilson was recalled Nov 14, 1938, after the *Kristallnacht*.

384 Jewish leaders collaborating: Eichmann Argentina MS, ca. 1957, in our possession. – We also use the memoirs written by Eichmann in Israeli prison, which were unwillingly released to us in Apr 2000 by a High Court order. See too Eichmann's interrogs. by the Israeli police officer Avner Werner Less: (1916–1987). Edited extracts were published by the late Jochen von Lang [Lang-Piechock], *ed*., in *Eichmann Interrogated: Transcripts from the Archives of the Israeli Police* (New York, 1983). On Eichmann's Vienna Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung, see Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann Männer* (Europaverlag, Vienna, 1994), and T. Friedmann (*ed*.), *Vollständiger Bericht von Dr Löwenherz über die Tätigkeit Eichmanns und Brunners in Wien – Prag – Berlin, 1938–45* (Haifa, 1995).

384 118,000 Jews: *New York Times*, Jun 2, 2007: Marjorie Backman, 'A Nation's Lost Holocaust History, Now on Display.' She writes: 'Ultimately, two-thirds of Vienna's Jewish community survived the Holocaust, but more than 65,000 Austrian Jews were murdered.' Their collaboration with Eichmann is a sensitive subject. In the summer of 2000, two men, hired to empty a vacant building of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (Jewish Community), found 800 dusty boxes with half a million pages of name records. Raul Hilberg, author of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, tried to find out who selected these names. He told *The New York Times*,

'Whenever I asked anyone at all, I got the same answer. The Community did not prepare the list. On the other hand, the Gestapo people after the war insisted that they prepared no lists. But someone had to choose the people and look up the addresses.'

384 Evian: Dr Werner Best to HH, Aug 15, 1938 (with annexes), initialled 'HH' (USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 612).

385 chartered a liner: Eichmann does not name the vessel, perhaps the *St Louis*, a Hamburg-Amerika Line vessel, which sailed with 937 Jewish 'refugees' from Hamburg on May 13, 1939; only twenty-two had valid US visas and were allowed by Cuba to land. The rest were returned to Europe, where their problems continued. The Jewish group leader on board *St Louis* was lawyer Joseph Joseph of Düsseldorf – a childhood mentor of Dr Goebbels.

385 House of Habsburg: HH to SS *Gruppenf.* Wilhelm Keppler, Reichsbeauftragter für Österreich, Mar 30, 1938 (NA, T175, roll 32; Heiber, No. 35).

385 Schuschnigg: SHA Hauptamt Abt. II/2, Vermerk, 'Prozess Schuschnigg,' May 5, 1938 in RGVA: USHMM RG-11.001 M, roll 452. – Franz Six to Abt. II 121, May 6, 1938 (Carto film #6D). And Himmler to Frau Vera von Schuschnigg, Oct 12, 1938 (in private hands). She was given pampered treatment in Dachau.

385 SHA Hauptamt Abt. II/112, Vermerk, sgd. Hagen: 'Vorbereitung der Italienreise des Führers,' Jan 21, 1938: USHMM: RSHA roll 14: RGVA fond 500 opis 4 folder 45. – In general on the state visit, Marga's diary, May 1938.

386 Manhunt for assassin: Leitstelle Koblenz to magistrates and others, Apr 5 – Jul 14, 1938 (BA file NS.29/vorl. 435); see Hoffmann, *Resistance*, p.252.

386 state visit to Italy: Marga diary, May 4–9, 1938.

386 Chimera d'Arezzo bronze: Brandt to Ahnenerbe, Aug 10, 1938: NA, T175, roll 50, p.3449; Heiber, No. 36. The inscription is believed to read 'TINSCVIL', suggesting that the 2,500-year-old bronze was dedicated to the Etruscan god Tin or Tinia.

387 HH says sorry: IMT interrog. of Rudolf Brandt, Apr 26, 1947 by Dr Leo Alexander.

33: *Brown Mischief in Berlin*

389 overworked: Marga diary May 19, 1938.

389 Czech policemen: On October 20, 1940 the minister of justice ruled that the two policemen, Koranda and Kriegl, had no case to answer; HH disagreed and committed them to life imprisonment (BA, R22/4087).

390 Austrian Jews sent to Dachau: SS *Untersturmf.* Eichmann, Vermerk, betr. Berichterstattung, Vienna, May 30, 1938 (Freniere: KGB archive).

389 Sudeten Free Corps: Dr Martin Broszat's excellent study in *VfZ*, 1961, 30ff; and Köchling's own report dated 11 October 1938 (ND, EC366-1).

389 Lorenz's Note on the Jun 3, 1938 conference with Henlein is printed in ADAP (D), II, No. 237.

390 'beautiful days': Marga diary, Jun 7, 1938.

390 Heydrich a master of secrecy: Hans-Hendrik Neumann, born Aug 4, 1910 in Wuppertal, later the CEO of Philips Germany; see his IMT Interrog., Feb 12, 1948 (IfZ file ZS-1260).

391 our account of the Jun 17–21, 1938 anti-Jewish outrages in Berlin is based on Helldorff's report dated Jun 20, 1938 for Goebbels, found in Hitler's apartment in 1945 (Princeton Univ., Seeley Mudd Libr., Adolf Hitler collection, box 2); and a fifty-page Sicherheits-Hauptamt dossier in the RGVA, the Sonderarchiv Moscow: SD des RFSS, SD-Hauptamt: 'Berichte und Meldungen zur Judenaktion, Berlin, Juni 1938' (USHMM RSHA rolls 8 and 9: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 645).

392 'impractical': II/112 Meldung, dated Jun 28, 1938 in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 603.

392 May 31, 1938 razzias: SD Führer SS-OA Ost, II/112 Eilbericht an SHA Zentralabt. II/1, Jun 24, 1938 in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1, folder 645; *Berliner Tageblatt*, Jun 18, gives unverified figures: *e.g.,* the May 31 raids 330 arrests included 317 Jews. – Goebbels diary Jun 2 and 3, 1938.

393 reports of suicides: SD *Unterabschnitt* Berlin, report Jun 29, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 645).

393 *Forschungsamt* reports: Those quoted are FA reports N.91,329 of Jun 20, and N.91,383 of Jun 21, 1938 copied as *Geheime Reichssache* by II/112 (Herbert Hagen) – in the latter the ambassador identified the culprits as 'local groups of the NSDAP': USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA fond 500 opis 1 folder 645, fols. 43 *et seq.*; on Jul 11, 1938 Hagen listed ten further FA intercepts of foreign journalists reporting on 'the campaign against Judea in Berlin,' Brown Pages numbered between N.91,105 and N.91,619, *ibid*. And see the UP report from Berlin on NA film T120, roll 4357, 5162ff, and the letter from American journalist Louis Lochner to his family, Jul 10, 1938 (HL: Lochner papers, box 47). He and his wife witnessed 'orgies of window smearing' on Kurfürstendamm. Lochner's Jun 17 despatch published by *The Washington Post*, Jun 18, 1938 quotes an official as confirming that 'Goebbels himself ordered the raids.'

393 Goebbels Jun 10, 1938 address 'anläßl. Schulungsvortrages vor der Berliner Ordnungspolizei': Internal Vermerk, Stabskanzlei RFSS SD I/121 an II/112 im Hause, Berlin, Jun 17, 1938: the SD warned (in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 645) that violence against Jews might well follow. A second record dated June 22, 1938 added Goebbels habe 'dabei den

Polizeibeamten nahegelegt, sich ständiger Eingriffe gegen die Juden zu befleissigen' (*ibid.*); his own version is in his diary, Jun 11, 1938.

394 Harking back to 'Isidor' Weiss: *Unterabschnitt* report, Jun 29, 1938 (*ibid.*).

394 apply the brakes: Goebbels diary, Jun 21, 22, 1938.

394 Hitler personally intervened: quoted several times, *e.g.* in Stabskanzlei I/121 memoranda to II/112, sgd. Pl., Jun 17, 18, 22, 1938 RSHA film 9: the references to Hitler's '*Eingreifen*,' intervention, are double-lined in the left margin with two exclamation marks. Hagen also drafted a four-page summary, 'Aktion gegen die Juden ab Anfang Mai,' on Jun 29, 1938. It revealed the SD puzzlement about who originated the *Aktion*: who had printed the stickers, etc.

394 Goebbels had called: In his diary on Jun 19, 1938 he took the credit: 'Helldorff is now taking radical steps on the Jewish Problem. The Party is helping him in this. . . The police have understood my instructions.'

394 Heydrich tackled Berndt: Vermerk II/112, Hg. [Hagen], Jun 30, 1938: folder 645, *loc. cit*.

394 every store in Magdeburg: Telex commander of SS *Oberabschnitt* Elbe to SD-Hauptamt, I/12, Jun 22, 1938: 'Extract from daily information – I/12 – Jun 23, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 645).

395 plan of action: After a conference with SS *OSturmbannf.* Dr Six on June 16, Beutel, commander of SS *Oberabschnitt* Süd, Munich, to SD Hauptamt, SS *Untersturmf.* Hagen, Jun 25; and reply, Hagen to SS *Oberabschnitt* Süd, for SS *HStuf* Gengenbach, Munich, ca. Jun 29, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 645).

396 Helldorff's Jewish dentist was Dr Julius Dresel: Heydrich to HH, Jul 22; HH replied Jul 30, 1938 (BDC file, Helldorff). And HH to Helldorff, Jul 30, 1938: Helmut Heiber, No. 451: *Die Rückseite des Hakenkreuzes: Absonderliches aus den Akten des Dritten Reiches* (München 1993).

396 minister of economics opposed: SD Hauptamt, Abt. II/112, Vermerk, Jul 23, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 7).

396 Helldorff's guidelines: Graf von Helldorff circular, Berlin, Jul 20, 1938: RGVA fond 500 opis 1 folder 630 (USHMM RSHA roll 8).

Chapter 34: Chamberlain and Munich

397 HH's private visit to Führer: SS *Obersturmf.* Max Wünsche diary, Jun 29, 1938: NS.10/125.

397 opening paragraphs: Marga diary Jul 3, 12, 24, 1938.

398 signed correspondence: Telex Hedwig Potthast to SS *Hauptsturmf.* Hermann Dörner, Gmund, Jul 27, 1938: in private hands.

398 the photo album of Terboven's wife, Else *née* Janke, is in the possession of an Atlanta collector.

398 Heydrich reserves the right: Dr Franz Six, SS *Osturmbannf.*, chief of Zentralabteilung I/1, to all SD officers, Jul 5, 1938: USHMM RSHA roll 9: RGVA fond 500 opis 1 folder 645: *loc. cit*.

399 Polish Jews in Berlin: Hagen, Vermerk, Apr 3, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 1).

399 Turkey: Zentralabt. II/122, Bericht betr. Ausbürgerungen polnischer Juden (USHMM RSHA roll 1).

399 law of expatriation: *Gesetz über die Entziehung der Staatsbürgerschaft*, Mar 31: See II/112 to II/1, sgd. Hagen, Apr 27, 1938, commentary on this new Polish law (*ibid*.).

399 gaming the system: see 'Ausbürgerungen polnischer Juden,' *ibid*. And SD-Hauptamt, Abt. II, Bericht, 'Judentum,' geheim, undated, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 7).

399 Jüterbog speech: Based on the diary of Wolf Eberhard, Keitel's adjutant, and his four-page note on the speech (Sammlung Irving). Gen. Milch noted, Aug 15: '2:45–4:15 p.m. A glimpse into [Hitler's] thinking, his mind is made up!'

401 Heligoland: HH to Walther Wüst and to SS *Sturmbannf.* Wolfram Sievers of *Ahnenerbe*, Apr 29, 1939 (NA film T175, roll 25, p.0667; Heiber No. 39a); and HH to Prof. Wüst, Sep 5, 1938 (NA film T175, roll 25, pp.0662f; Heiber, No. 39b).

401 Hochzeit: HH to Wüst, Sep 30, 1938: Heiber: *Die Rückseite des Hakenkreuzes: Absonderliches aus den Akten des Dritten Reiches* (München 1993).

401 familiar personal remedy: Marga diary, Sep 3, 1938.

401 Gen. Adam: See Wilhelm Adam, unpubl. MS in IfZ: ED.109/2.

402 British racial elite: Ausspruch des Führers am 7.9.1938 bei Tisch, typescript, signed H. Himmler. Typescript note, Nbg, Sep 9, 1938, initialled 'Pt.' *i.e*. Potthast (Rendell Collection).

404 diary: 'Zweiter Besuch des Kehlsteinhauses durch den Führer, Ward Price, Himmler und Goebbels.'

404 Köchlin: Jodl diary, and Tgb. des GenStdH, Abt II (ND: EC-366-2).

407 Berger absorbs the Free Corps: IMT interrog. of Wolff, Jan 28, 1938: ZS-317.

407 Brown Pages: Göring handed the whole sheaf to the British ambassador on Sep 26, 1938 (PRO, FO.371/21742).

408 gave Goebbels credit: Hitler's speech to NSDAP editors, Nov 10, 1938: *VfZ*, 1958, p.184.

409 Jews at Friedrichstrasse station: SS *Oberabschnitt* Ost, to SD Hauptamt

Zentrale Abt. II/1, Sep 30, 1938; SD Hauptamt I/121 Stabskanzlei, Vermerk, Oct 3, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 1). Müller, Gestapa, Berlin, Sep 2, 1938 to all Gestapo offices: USHMM RSHA roll 1.

409 thickness of concrete: one of Hitler's staff told us he witnessed this.

35: *Five Shots Fired in Paris*

410 smash Czechoslovakia: Goebbels diary, Oct 2, 3, 1938.

410 Himmler with Rommel: Hoffmann's Leica photo album, Oct 1938, NA, 242-HLB-3452 No. 2 and (with Schmundt) No. 3.

410 Woyrsch: IMT interrog. of Udo von Woyrsch on Apr 7, 1948. The unappreciative interrogator changed the subject (ZS-1395).

411 nervous warnings: Goebbels diary, Jan 17, 1939.

411 Lída Baarová: Goebbels diaries, *passim*, 1938; and our interview with Frau Baarová in Salzburg, Austria, Jul 4, 1993. See Ulrich von Hassell diary, Jan 26, 1939, quoting Göring's sister Olga Rigele, and Rosenberg diary, Feb 6, 1939, pp.80f, quoting HH. – In her later ghostwritten memoirs, *Die süße Bitterkeit meines Lebens* (Koblenz 2000), pp.142-4, Lída describes what Helldorff told her of the Kehlstein meeting of Oct 14, 1938 at which Hitler ordered a reconciliation with Magda: she stated that HH, Karl Hanke, and Helldorff were present as well.

411 three months to come to heel: Goebbels diary, Jan 18-20; Rosenberg diary, Feb 6, 1939.

411 *The Gambler* (*Der Spieler*): SS *Untersturmführer* –, Abt. II/1, im Hause, Kurzinformation II, Oct 29 (USHMM, RSHA roll 1). – Rudolf Likus to Ribbentrop, Nov 3, 1938 (AA serial 43, p.29042). The scandal is noted in the diaries of Groscurth, Dec 30, 1938, and Hassell, Jan 22 and 26, 1939, quoting Göring's sister Olga. *Life* magazine, Mar 20, 1939, reported that three divorce attorneys turned Magda down, fearing consequences.

411 Greven brawl: Hanke to HH, May 20, 1939 (BDC file, Hanke).

412 grand, and strong: Marga diary, Nov 2, 1938.

412 Neuwedell: Letter from SD *Oberabschnitt* Nord Stettin to chief of SHA Berlin, Sep 29, 1938; these and later incidents are in report of SD Abt. II/112, Ausschreitungen gegen Juden, in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630.

412 Bavaria: Dr Weiler an den Vorstand der israelit. Kultusgemeinde, Oct 14, 1938: in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630.

412 Dortmund: SD *Oberabschnitt* Süd to SD Hauptamt I/12, Nov 7, 1938, in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630.

412 Jewish circles are frantic: telex from SD *Oberabschnitt* Südwest an SHA

Zentralabtlg. II/1, Nov 3, 1938, in USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630.

413 more synagogues: *ibid*.

413 proceeding to plan: Goebbels diary, Oct 12, 1938.

413 *Entjudung*: Reichsverteidigungsrat, 31. Sitzung, Oct 14, 1938: NA film T175, roll 131, 3295ff.

413 reaping the fruits: Goebbels diary, Oct 13, 1938.

413 a fine statue in Warsaw: Lipski to Józef Beck, Sep 21, 1938: in *Das Archiv Dirksens (1938–1939). Dokumente und Materialien aus der Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges,* Band 2. Captured papers published by the Soviet foreign ministry (Moscow 1949), vol. 2.

414 letter to Gestapo chiefs: Dr Werner Best, circular telex to Gestapo main offices, Oct 27, 1938: USHMM RSHA roll 1. – *Star*, London, Oct 28, 1938: 'Nazis swoop on Polish Jews.'

414 arrests in Vienna: Telex dringend SS *Obersturmbannf.* Polte an SD Hauptamt II/112, Oct 28, 1938: *ibid*.

414 arrests in Berlin: Telex SD from SS *Oberabschnitt* Ost, to SD Hauptamt II/1, Oct 28, 1938, 12.45 Uhr: *ibid*.

414 Berlin East Station (*Ostbahnhof*): ditto, Oct 20, 1938, 20:02 hr, *ibid*.

415 The contemporary account of the ordeal: Y Arad, Y Gutman, Abraham Margaliot, *eds*., *Documents on the Holocaust* (Yad Vashem, 1981) pp.121–122; see too Sybil Milton, *The Expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany, October 1938 to July 1939: A Documentation*, Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 29 (1984), pp.169–199; Gertrud Pickhan, *'Niemandsland': Die Briefe der Greta Schiffmann und das Schicksal einer jüdischen Familie, ausgewiesen aus Dortmund im Oktober 1938, Beiträge zur Geschichte Dortmunds* (Dortmund, 2000), pp.161–209; Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Auftakt zur Vernichtung: Die Vertreibung polnischer Juden aus Deutschland im Jahre 1938* (Osnabrück, 2002); and H J Fliedner, *Die Judenverfolgung in Mannheim 1933–1945*, vol. II (Stuttgart, 1971), pp.72-73.

415 arrests in Stuttgart: Telex SD *Oberabschnitt* Südwest, Stuttgart to SD Hauptamt, II/1, Berlin, Oct 29, 1938, 14:43: USHMM RSHA roll 1.

415 dumping over the border: SD Führer des SS-*Oberabschnitt* Südost sgd. SS *Obersturmbannf.* Günther, Breslau to SD Hauptamt, Berlin, Oct 28, 1938, 23:30, *ibid*.

415 Gleiwitz: From SD OA Südost, SS *Obersturmbannf.* Günther, Breslau to SD Hauptamt I/12, Nov 1; and SS *Oberf.* Wiegand, SD Führer of SS *Oberabschnitt* Südost, to SD Hauptamt, I/12, Oct 29, 1938: *ibid*.

415 Italian radio: *Forschungsamt*: Radio monitoring report N.101,239, Oct 29, 1939: *ibid*.

415 dumped seventeen thousand: RFSS, sgd. Dr Wetz, to Ausw. Amt, Nov 2, 1938; and Herbert Hagen II/112, Vermerk von Nov 5, 1938: *ibid*. A document 'Auswanderung' in RSHA roll 7, folio 146, states that fourteen thousand Polish Jews were expelled.

415 Brieger: Himmler to Wiedemann, Oct 31, 1938; endorsed in red crayon, 'file,' Nov 9, 1938. (In private hands. It was auctioned www.rrauction.com/content/pdf/313pdf/military.pdf. Dr Brieger earned a doctorate at Marburg in 1931 with a thesis on 'Grundrechte und Polizeigewalt,' Human rights and the police use of force.

416 Himmler's regular Oct–Nov routine: Josef Kiermaier, typescript, Westertimke, Aug 5, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

416 Herschel Feibel Grynszpan, born March 28, 1921 in Hanover. Much has been written on the Grynszpan case, but not using (as we have) the voluminous SD dossiers in the RGVA Moscow, fond 500 opis 1, folders 622a; and SD des RFSS, SD Oberabschnitt-West, 'Vorgang: Grynszpan, Herschel, geb. 28.3.21, Hannover' (RGVA fond 500 opis 1 folder 635).

See also Helmut Heiber, 'Der Fall Grynszpan,' *VfZ*, 1957, 154–172; and Irving, *Mastermind*, chap. 32; and Hermann Graml, *Der 9. November 1938* (Bonn, 1955); and Heiber's interviews of former ambassador Count Welczek (IfZ, ZS-0624). Ron Roizen suggested in 1986, 'Herschel Grynszpan: the Fate of A Forgotten Assassin,' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2. pp.217–228, that Grynszpan probably died in wartime captivity, but Leopold Gutterer, Goebbels's *Staatssekretär*, told us on Jun 30, 1993 that during his own denazification *Spruchkammerverfahren* in Hamburg, 1947/1948, Grynszpan was 'pointed out to him' standing at the back of the courtroom. The writer Michael Soltikow also claimed that Grynszpan had been spotted attending his Munich trial in 1960: Roizen, *op. cit*. The young Jew's ghost haunted History after Nov 1938.

417 Thora yeshiva, Frankfurt: At police request the Regierungspräsident in Wiesbaden shut down the seminary a few days later. Telex SD Hauptamt Berlin to the SD commander of SS *Oberabschnitt* Süd, München, Nov 8 and 12, 1938. RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folders 622a, 635. See too the well informed *New York Times* story, 'Berlin Raids Reply to Death of Envoy,' Nov 10, 1938 – which was filed on Nov 9, of course.

418 *Petit Parisien* quoted in *Berliner Tageblatt*, Nov 8, 1938.

418 unwittingly spoke to Welczek: Welczek, *loc. cit*.

418 Vincent Moro-Giafferi (b. Paris, Jun 6, 1878 – d. Feb 15, 1956). For the seizure of his files, see the Master's thesis by Gerald Schwab, 'The Grynszpan Affair,' Feb 22, 1958, which exploits a monograph written by Friedrich Wilhelm Grimm, who would have prosecuted the case (Microfilm in HL).

419 intercepted message: SD Hauptamt III 3242, Vermerk, Nov 28, 1938, in

USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630: 'G. hat aus Eifersucht dann die Tat vollbracht,' and Telex SD Führer des SS *Oberabschnitts* Elbe an das SD Hauptamt Abt. II/112, Dec 10, 1938, *ibid*. Although it turns out that his brother was homosexual, it is not proven in Ernst vom Rath's case.

419 keep tabs: SD Hauptamt, Erich Ehrlinger to all SD officers of SS *Oberabschnitte*, Nov 15, 1938 (RGVA Moscow, fond 500 opis 1 folders 622a, 635).

419 'Prisoner Otto Schneider': Helmut Heiber, one of Germany's finest postwar historians, to the Hanover court, Mar 24, 1959: *cit*. Ron Roizen, 'Herschel Grynszpan: the Fate of A Forgotten Assassin,' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2. pp.217–228, 1986, without further comment. – Hans-Jürgen Döscher: *Reichskristallnacht – Die Novemberpogrome* 1938 (München 2000) bases his belief that Grynszpan died in KZ Sachsenhausen on second- and third-hand hearsay: that a prisoner there had said Grynzspan had told him in early Aug 1942 he 'believed it was his last day'; and that [Paul] Sakowski, b. 1920, bragged to a fellow prisoner in the notorious East German prison in Bautzen in 1956 that he had personally hanged Grynzspan: he cites (p.172) Hermann Möhring, Jan 21, 1966 to Landgericht Essen. Sakowski's narratives of his thirty-two year ordeal in various prison camps including the Soviet Vorkuta are increasingly lurid. It is unlikely that just as Germany was entering its most victorious years it would have terminated a star prisoner like Grynzspan.

419 Hanover court: Heiber found in the Hanover court records a note 'that Grynszpan was then [1959] living in Hamburg.' The Hamburg city archivist informed Heiber that Grynszpan had been transferred to police HQ in Magdeburg on Jan 20, 1945. It is clear from the GCHQ intercepts that, like the concentration camps, prisons in the Reich were ravaged by air raid damage and epidemics, and he may have succumbed to one.

419 Handwritten note on the report: 'Bericht wurde nicht abgesandt, da durch die Ereignisse am 9.11.38 überholt.' (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 630).

419 Marga Himmler's (rare) remark about the Jews is written without context in her diary of Nov 14, 1938: 'Diese Judengeschichte, wann wird das Pack uns verlassen, damit man auch seines Lebens froh wird.'

36: *The Big Night*

420 Helldorff's announcement: press notice dated Nov 9, 1938 in USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 625.

420 Weizsäcker: Von Weizsäcker, Note, Nov 8, 1938: ND: NG-2799; Akten des RAM, 3/2, Polen, pp.78712-3.

421 spoke at Freimann: 'Rede vor den SS-Gruppenführern bei einer Gruppen-

führerbesprechung im Führerheim der SS-Standarte „Deutschland"', Nov 8, 1938. See Bradley E Smith. Agnes F Peterson (ed.). *Heinrich Himmler. Geheimreden* 1933 *bis* 1945 *und andere Ansprachen* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin, Wien, 1974), p.38. – An invitation to this speech, from SS *Gruf.* Schmitt to Gauleiter SS *Gruf.* Bürckel, Oct 31, 1938 is in private hands.

422 out to Gmund: Karl Wolff, interrogated at IMT Nuremberg by Col. H A Brundage, Sep 7, 1945 (the interrog. summary wrongly dates it Nov 7). Wolff notably volunteered that 'Hitler more or less gave the signal for such a demonstration' but wanted it to look spontaneous: 'The Führer ordered through Heydrich, and sent it down through the gauleiters, that synagogues should be destroyed,' but looking like a spontaneous public reaction. That line-of-command was impossible, and Wolff's later testimony was the opposite. Brundage rightly admonished Wolff to testify only from his own knowledge and not from what he might have read. Apprehensive about capital charges, Wolff was going through a period of mental strain.

422 HH's 'hibernation': Karl Wolff, taped conv. together with Wilfried von Oven in Chile, Jun 26, 1979 (Gerd Heidemann collection).

423 Frhr. von Eberstein: taped conv. with 'Richard' [Schulze-Kossens] in 1975/76: transcript in IfZ, ZS-0539.

423 keep the gauleiters: Overheard by Christa Schroeder, Hitler's secretary, interviewed by us (IfZ, ZS-2240).

423 *Polizei zurückziehen*: in 'Hitler und sein Stoßtrupp in der "Reichskristallnacht",' *VfZ* (2008), Heft 4, pp.603–619, Angela Hermann seizes on these two words. 'Diese Notiz ist für die Forschung deswegen von enormer Bedeutung, da alle hochrangigen NSDAP-Führer nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg erklärt hatten, mit den Novemberpogromen hätte Hitler nichts zu tun gehabt, diese habe Goebbels eigenmächtig in Gang gesetzt, und der "Führer" sei davon überrascht worden und hätte sie missbilligt.' For Hermann, the writings of a propaganda minister outweighs the sworn testimony of every other first-hand witness. She would fit better on the Queens Bench Division of the British High Court. Although she is also author of *Der Weg in den Krieg 1938/39. Quellenkritische Studien zu den Tagebüchern von Joseph Goebbels*, München 2011 (Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 83), she makes no mention of Hitler's *Eingreifen* against Goebbels's Jun 1938 pogrom: see our Note to p.394. Oddly, she also asserts that the first writers to exploit the Goebbels Kristallnacht diaries ('*Wissenschaftlich ausgewertet wurden sie ab 1998 erstmals von . . .*') were Saul Friedländer, Peter Longerich, and Ian Kershaw, from 1998 onwards. We had first exploited them in the Moscow archives in June 1992, and published them in *Der Spiegel* and *The Sunday Times*, London, in July 1992, and in *Mastermind* in 1996. As for Hitler's real fury, Karl Krause, his valet, was one witness: see Rochus Misch, *Hitler's Last Witness*, New York,

2017, p.27; and the unpublished memoirs of the Luftwaffe's chief judge-advocate Christian von Hammerstein, *Mein Leben*, ca. 1957, self-published, p.87 (Göring told him next morning that Hitler was livid at the outrages); see further Gerhard Engel's notes, and Likus's report of November 30 (AA serial 43, 29067).

423 The order to 'hold back' the police is not significant: when disturbances began on the Munich University campus in Jan 1943, HH ordered the police 'visibly pulled back,' the '*sichtbare Zurückziehung aller polizeilichen Maßnahmen*': HH to Eberstein, Jan 15, 1943 (BA: NS.19/3787). Similar police restraint was employed during the nationwide mob violence, arson, and looting in Britain in 2010 and the United States ten years later.

423 Goebbels delivers his inflammatory harangue: Goebbels diary, Nov 10, 1938. We first published this in Jul 1992. Independent evidence of what Goebbels said: Report by British Consulate, Munich, to HM embassy, Berlin, Nov 11, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/21637); see too IMT interrog. of Ribbentrop, Sep 13, 1945; and report of Oberstes Parteigericht to Göring, Feb 13, 1939 (ND: 3063-PS), and the interrog. of Maj. Walter Buch on May 1, 1947 (ZS-955). IMT interrog. of Ribbentrop on Sep 13, 1945, and of Julius Streicher (who had it from SA Ogruf. Hanns-Günther von Obernitz). Several other gauleiters ignored Goebbels's demands that night, including Carl Röver of Bremen (a victim of the euthanasia campaign in 1942); Jakob Sprenger of Frankfurt, and Karl Kaufmann of Hamburg. See Prof. Hermann Graml, *Reichskristallnacht. Antisemitismus und Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1988) p.33; and Streicher's counsel's witness application for Fritz Herrwarth, Jan 24, 1946 (NA: RG.260, OMGUS files, box 117). Also Kehrl, 141f, quoting Gauleiter Emil Stürtz of Brandenburg; and Gauleiter Albert Hoffmann, MS, 1950 (BA Kl.Erw. 954/II).

424 Gestapo Berlin, telex to Leitstellen, 23:55 hr Nov 9, 1938, sgd. Müller (ND: 374-PS); and see Emanuel Feinermann, Rita Thalmann: *Die Kristallnacht*. Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt am Main 1999, p.83. See too Günther Gillessen, 'Reichskristallnacht,' fiftieth-anniversary supplement to *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nov 5, 1988; and Dieter Obst, *'Reichskristallnacht': Ursachen und Verlauf des antisemitischen Pogroms vom November 1938* (Frankfurt am Main 1991).

425 Schleswig-Holstein: SA *Ogruf.* Jochen Meyer-Quade, Chief of SA Gruppe Nordmark, Dec, 9, 1938: Report on the *Aktion* of Nov 9/10, 1938 (BDC: Schumacher Slg., /409 SA; and BDC file 240/I). Quade was *Polizeipräsident* in Kiel since Apr 1934; killed in action on the eleventh day of WW2 in Poland, he became a folk hero.

425 Hitler's apartment: described by Anni Winter in ZS-0194; she had been his long-time housekeeper since 1929.

426 scene in Hitler's apartment: based on the transcript of Karl Wolff's 1979 Chile conv. with Heidemann, and on HH's 'private-safe' *aide mémoire* as dictated to Wolff's *Ordonnanz* Luitpold Schallermeier: see Schallermeier's affidavit sworn on Jul 5, 1946 and his IMT interrog., Jun 23, 1947 by Norbert G Barr. The affidavit is defence exhibit SS(A)-5 in IMT, vol. xlii, pp.510–513; an undated but signed version is in ZS-0526, fols. 1–2. We have reservations about this affidavit. Dr Servatius provided it to the IMT as a defence exhibit for the SS, indicted as a 'criminal organisation.'

426 Heydrich surprised: Dr Werner Best described (Erlebnisse betr. Heydrich, MS, Kopenhagen, Oct 1, 1949) how 'in my presence Heydrich was totally surprised by the operation on Nov 9, 1938, when the synagogue next to the Four Seasons, where we were, went up in flames without his prior knowledge.' Best repeated this in letters to Fritz Tobias on Sep 29, 1977 and Jun 24, 1987 (Tobias Collection).

426 Von Below comes up: Our taped interview of Col. Nicolaus von Below, May 18, 1968 is in the Irving collection, IfZ: ED.100/203. All these tapes were lost when our London possessions were seized in May 2002. He wrote in his original post-war memoirs: 'Als inzwischen aus Berlin gleiche Berichte kamen, gab Hitler auch noch an Himmler und Goebbels Befehl, die Zerstörung jüdischer Geschäfte und Synagogen sofort zu unterbinden.' Nicolaus von Below, unpublished MS, ca. 1947, p.83.

427 Eberstein: HH did not favour Eberstein. When he resigned as *Polizeipräsident* in 1939 HH accepted, but Hitler overruled him. According to Helldorff, Eberstein was quietly opposed to the Nazis, like the police chiefs of Potsdam and Breslau. 12 AGp Interrog. of Kaltenbrunner, annex IX, Jun 28, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/271); notes on 1945 Interrog. of SS *Ogruf.* Berger, undated (PRO file KV.2/172).

427 Wiedemann: Fritz Wiedemann, MS, Feb 1939 (in Libr. of Congress, Wiedemann papers, box 604).

427 Schaub: Contradicting this, the Goebbels diary version has Schaub participating in the arson of the 'Hitler squad'. Schaub wrote that 'apart from a few lesser officers' the SS was innocent on this night. Hitler 'was furious with Goebbels,' and 'made a terrible scene,' lecturing him on the damage being done to Germany's image overseas. Julius Schaub MS, in the Irving collection (IfZ, ED 100/203).

428 order for cessation: Text in IMT interrog. of Wolff, Sep 7, 1945.

427 Heydrich telex at 1.20 a.m.: 'Abschrift. Fernschreiben. Blitz München 47 767 10.11.38 01.20 - Chu [*sic*] an alle Staatspolizeileit- und Staatspolizeistellen, an alle SD-Oberabschnitte und SD-Unterabschnitte, Nov 10, 1938, 1 Uhr 20 (ND 3051-PS; in IMT, vol. xxxi). It is regrettable that we have only a US 7th Army Document Center photocopy of a typed copy. Note

the abbreviation *Chu*, instead of *Chi*, and the haphazard use of SS runes.

429 Himmler dictated: Wolff, ZS-317, Mar 22, 1948, Aug 11, 1952; affidavit by Luitpold Schallermeier, in IMT, xlii, pp.511ff. The statement that HH wanted Jews as such protected merits scepticism. Schallermeier's July 1946 memory seems suspect: that HH *sealed* the 'private-safe' version (so he travelled with signet ring, sealing wax, and flame?); and that back in Berlin he handed it to HH who put it in his safe – but HH was on leave for the next month. – *See too* Rudolf Likus report that HH blames Goebbels (NA film T120, roll 31, pp.29067.

429 according to one source: Günther Schmitt of the SS-Verfügungstruppe, quoted by Ulrich von Hassell, diary, Nov 27, 1938.

429 2:56 a.m.: Anordnung Nr. 174/38, Nov 10, 1938 (ND: 3063-PS, repeated as a circular, BDC Ordner, 240/I).

429 3:45 a.m. Gestapo-Amt Abt. II, Telex. signed i.A. Bartz, Nov 10, 1938 (IfZ: F45/8. Cited in *Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938-1940*, p.157, note 277). One SS unit evidently got the wrong message: The commander of SS Oberabschnitt Main, SS *Ogruf.* Ernst Heinrich Schmauser, is said to have telephoned 81 SS Standarte at 3:10 a.m. with these orders:

1. *Sämtliche Synagogen in Brand stecken.*
2. *Jüdische Schulen dem Erdboden gleichmachen.*
3. *Sämtliche Akten beschlagnahmen.*
4. *Plünderungen, ebenso kriminelle Delikte sind bei Todesstsrafe verboten.*
5. *Weder in Uniform noch in Räuberzivil daran teilnehmen. Bei der Brandlegung der Synagoge ist darauf zu achten, dass das Feuer nicht auf Nebengebäude übergreift.'*

The document is from the prosecutor's office, Hof, KLa 4/51, cited by Dieter Dost, *op. cit.*, p.87. It obviously conflicts with those of 2:56 a.m. and 3:45 a.m. So: Is it a document, or a fading memory in 1951?

429 Krefeld: Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, RW36 Karton 1, Hefter 9, cited in Obst, *op. cit.*, p.86.

430 acres of plate-glass: at the Reichsverteidigungsrat in his air ministry on Nov 18, 1938, Göring put this cost at five million Reich marks (NA film T120, roll 131, pp.3088ff; verbatim at pp.3157ff).

431 Goebbels issued a directive: RPL circular telex, Nov 10, 1938, to all Gauleitungen (Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York, G-198).

431 Physical damage: report by Heydrich to Göring, ND: 3058-PS; USA-508. See H G Sellenthin, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin und des Gebäudes Fasanenstraße 79/80* (Berlin, 1959). When Walter Buch heard of the rapes committed by SA- and SS-men he ordered them expelled from the party and turned over to the regular courts: IMT interrog. May 1, 1947, ZS-955.

432 Göring conference in RLM, Nov 12: ND: 1816-PS: half the transcript

survives, see *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. 4. The Goebbels quotation is from his diary, Nov 13, 1938.

432 Goebbels press conference: *Time* magazine, Mar 20, 1939; *DAZ*, Nov 12, 1938, report on the conf.; and Likus to Ribbentrop, Nov 11, 1938, T120, roll 31, p.9049.

432 Welczek blamed Goebbels: Sir Eric Phipp.to the FO, Tel. 31, Jan 25, 1939: 'He [Welczek] had no reason to wish to clear Himmler, whom he had never even met'. Frank Roberts of the FO Central Dept. in London was sceptical, remarking, without offering evidence, 'We know that it was Hitler himself and not only Goebbels who inspired the Jewish pogroms' (PRO file FO.371/22961).

432 Consul at Geneva: H B Livingston to Sir George Warner, Geneva, Dec 27, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/23005).

432 twenty mass meetings in Munich: his report is in PRO file FO.371/21637.

432 Cologne: report by H E Bell, British Consulate General, Cologne, Nov 30, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/21638).

432 Leipzig: report by David H Buffman, US Consul at Leipzig, Nov 21, 1938: NDL L-202, in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. vii, pp.1037-41.

432 Berlin: Sir G Ogilvie-Forbes to Ld Halifax, Nov 16, 1938: *DGFP* 1919-1939, Third Series, vol. iii, pp.275-77. His consul in Frankfurt-on-Main had received many anonymous letters condemning 'this outbreak of wanton brutality and destruction.' A E Dowden, Acting British Consul at Frankfurt/Main, Nov 16, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/21638).

432 Munich: report by Wolstan Weld-Forester, Acting British Consul at Munich, Nov 24, 1938 (*ibid*.).

433 Hamburg: L M Robinson, British Consulate Gen., Hamburg, Nov 22, 1938 (PRO file FO.371/21638).

433 training camps: Kurt Lischka appealed for the Jews' speedy release by Express letter to the local Stapo offices. Abt. II 112 0 Vermerk, Nov 19; and Lischka, Schnellbriefe an Staatspolizeistellen in Kiel, Breslau, etc., Nov 22, 1938 (Carto film #6D).

433 Eichmann: See Artur Prinz, *The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration* (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1958), pp.213–4. For problems caused Eichmann by the Nov 1938 pogrom see his Israel Memoirs, fols. 97ff. Even in his death cell he was baffled about how the mischief started. 'Apparently through a communications error the Gestapo and SD offices in the SD Danube section [Oberabschnitt] were informed only after the synagogues and buildings of the Israelite Community were ablaze. . . The files, index cards, foreign correspondence, everything went up in flames. I rescued what I could.'

433 eighty-five thousand: SD-Hauptamt, Abt. II, Bericht, 'Judentum,' GEHEIM, undated, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 7). The document '*Auswanderung*' [Emigration] in this file states in round figures that 6,000 had emigrated from Ostmark up to Mar 11, 1938, plus 45,000 from March until August (when Eichmann's agency began operations in the Rothschild Palace), and 34,000 more between August 1938 and Jan 1, 1939. – Rather different statistics are offered by Herbert A Straus, *Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses*, Leo Baeck Institut, Year Book, 1980: 1933-1937 inclusive total 129,000; 1938 40,000; and 1939 78,000. Roizen, *op. cit*., estimates therefore that from 1933 to Kristallnacht emigration from 'Germany' was 159,000 and 88,000 more from then to end of 1939.

433 The *Jewish Weekly* in London, No. 174, May 26, 1939, citing an article by Dr Rudolph Stahl, 'Vocational Retraining of Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1938,' in *Jewish Social Studies*, the quarterly journal of the Conference on Jewish Relations (Carto film #6D).

434 Hafiz Kahn: affidavit by Khan, for the Karl Wolff Trial, quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sep 15, 1964 (Tobias Collection).

434 Burckhardt: Carl J Burckhardt, *Meine Danziger Mission 1937–1939* (Munich, Verlag Georg D W Callwey, 1960), pp.230-1.

434 Goebbels issued orders: Groscurth diary, *op. cit*., Dec 29, 1938. HH campaigned against Goebbels with Berlin officials like Ludwig Steeg, the deputy mayor (killed in Soviet captivity, Sep 1945); Steeg's son was overheard in 1944 telling Helldorff's son that while Goebbels hated both their fathers, 'oddly enough' [*komischerweise*] HH backed the mayor against the propaganda minister. CSDIC(UK) report SRM.821, conv. of Obergefr. Steeg with von Helldorff, Aug 23, 1944 (PRO file WO.208/4139).

434 Daluege: Daluege to Hess, Dec 12, 1938 (BDC file on Goebbels; DI film DJ-81).

434 Hassell: Ulrich von Hassell: *Vom anderen Deutschland. Aus den nachgelassenen Tagebüchern 1938–1944* (Zurich, 1947), entries for Nov 25 and Dec 23 and 29, 1938. Hess wrote that Goebbels alone was to blame.

434 Lutze diary, Nov 9–10, 1938.

434 prepared to use force against SA: NA film T175, roll 411, pp.2933020.

434 closer to a breakdown: Goebbels diary, Nov 19, 1938.

434 impervious: see Hans Mommsen's scathing review of the Marxist historian Prof. Richard J Evans' work, *Das Dritte Reich*, vol. 2 (DVA, Munich 2006), in *Die Zeit*, Nov 9, 2006. Any belief in Evans' neutrality is dispelled by his glowing eulogy for Eric Hobsbawm, *The Guardian*, Mar 20, 1913. For a similarly conformist view see Prof. Hans-Jürgen Döscher, *Reichskristallnacht* (Berlin, 2000); he also adopts the rainbow-hued version that Grynszpan was a homosexual whom Vom Rath had jilted. This clever story,

cooked up for tactical reasons by Grynszpan's defence team, overlooks that Grynszpan was hoping to kill the *ambassador*, not Vom Rath.

435 Göring issued on Dec 28, 1938 a circular reporting further decisions by Hitler moderating the harsher anti-Jewish regulations (BA: Kl. Erw. 203).

435 Bavaud: see Hitler's table talk as reported by Werner Koeppen, Bericht No. 28, Sep 6, 1941. Koeppens wrote his notes on Hitler's table talk for Gauleiter Alfred Meyer, Rosenberg's official; they are microfilmed on NA film T84, roll 387, pp.0757ff. And see *Secret Conversations*, p.387; cited by Peter Hoffmann, *Security*, p.103.

Chapter 37: Elegant

436 Himmlers' vacation begins: Marga's diary, Nov 14, 1938.

436 Göring called a conference: partial transcript, Nov 12 (ND, 1816–PS); Heydrich to Göring, Nov. 11, 1938 (ND, 3058–PS).

436 Heydrich told Eichmann to attend, Nov 12: Telex SD Hauptamt sgd. *Sturmbannf.* Ehrlinger to *Standartenf.* Stahlecker, Vienna, Nov 11, 1938 in USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 625.

437 Göring's slew of decrees: Ordinance on restoration of city life, Nov 12; Ordinance on payment of penalty by Jews, Juden, Nov 12, and *RGBl.*, I, 1938, Nr. 189, Nov 14; and see press notice, Nov 13: *Der Angriff* gloated on Nov 18 ; *Deutsche Allg. Zeitung*, Nov 30, Dec 4 1938, all in USHMM RSHA, roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 625.

437 pogrom a bloody outrage: Darré talking, May 16, 1945 (SAIC/X-P5); and see Likus report, Nov. 30, 1938 (NA film T120, roll 31, p.29067).

437 Ilse Göring: Cited in Hassell's diary, Apr. 3, 1939, p.546).

438 danger of assassination: Marga diary, Dec 3, 1938.

438 Pottenstein: Marga diary, Dec 11, 1938. The Bayreuth professor Hans Brand had broken through thirty feet of rock in 1922 in the Devil's Hole, the Teufelsloch, and discovered caverns of stalagmites and stalactites; these were opened to the public in August 1923.

438 Globočnik 'eliminated': Despatch No. 29 by British Consul-General Donald St Clair Gainer, Vienna, Feb 3, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/223005). Germany required Gainer's recall in June 1939.

438 *gottgläubig*: article, 'Der erste SS Mann,' *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, Jan 5, 1939.

439 *Weltanschauung of Indo-Germanic Thinkers*: Timothy W Ryback, 'Hitler's Forgotten Library: The Man, His Books, and His Search for God,' in *The Atlantic Monthly*, New York, May 2003.

440 *kok-sagys* tyres: Letter HH to SS *Sturmbannf.* Heinrich Vogel, Mar 29, 1941, Heiber: *Reichsführer SS*, p.84f: the Führer recently told HH of a plant

from Russia yielding rubber; Letter on behalf of *Sturmbannf.* Dr Joachim Caeser, director of the Agricultural Dept. at KL Auschwitz, from *Hauptsturmf.* Wilhelm Ziemssen to Grothmann, Nov 12, 1942.

440 and the chauffeur's wife: Special Extract from S.R. Draft No. WG.449/445. CS/990: Gefreiter Pfaffenberger overheard on Feb 28, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4200). He also told of the alcoholic Toni Lehner (see our page 38), which is confirmed by papers in HH's files. HH's long-term family chauffeur Hans Bastians died in a June 14, 1940 shooting accident.

441 cigars tab: Aktenvermerk Pers Stab RFSS Dec 5, 1938: Heiber No. 455: *Die Rückseite des Hakenkreuzes: Absonderliches aus den Akten des Dritten Reiches* (München, 1993).

441 speeding fines: Yrjö von Grönhagen, *Himmlerin salaseura*m (Helsinki, 1948), p.94, recounting what Wiligut told him on Oct 14, 1935.

441 Jan 6, 1939: anniversary and gift album: Wolff to Hauptamtschefs, Jul 11 ('*einer Anregung des SS Ogruf. Heißmeyer entsprechend*') and Dec 28, 1938. Himmler diary, Jan 6, 1939. The 168-page album, *Ehren-Geschenkbuch 'Zehn Jahre Reichsführer SS,'* with fifty-nine mostly unpublished photos, was looted from Gmund, became part of the Bob Moses Collection, and has since surfaced in auctions by Hermann Historica and www.andreas-thies.de, selling latterly for over 30,000 dollars.

442 tenth anniversary as Reichsführer: Ogilvie-Forbes to Halifax, Jan 11 (PRO file FO.371/23005); *DAZ*, Jan 6, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/23005).

442 Speer half-joined SS: In Feb 1942 he only half completed the lengthy process required by the RuSHA, the Office for Race and Settlement. On July 25, 1942 Speer's staff submitted his 37-page partially completed ancestral tree (*Ahnentafel*: ND: 3568-PS = USA-75) with a note claiming that HH had ordered him enrolled into his Personal Staff as of July 20, with SS number 46,104; but HH did not want this busy minister bothered further; the gaps were never filled and Speer later claimed his acceptance into the SS was never completed. Speer: *Inside the Third Reich*, London, 1970, p.227; Sereny, *Speer*, pp.329ff.

443 Speer's brother: Hermann to Albert Speer, Jul 25, 1973, cited in Sereny, *Speer*, p.162.

443 Speer's uneasy feelings about Jews: Speer to his daughter May 14, 1953; cit. Sereny, *Speer*, p.90; and see Sereny's p.115, quoting his original Spandau draft MS. Speer had said the same, about HH's gift for selecting his men, under interrog. by SHAEF in 1945: 7th session, part I, Jun 1, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/5205): 'He took his time in making decisions.'

443 brickworks: Hermann to Albert Speer, Jul 25, 1973: Sereny, *Speer*, p.162.

443 birthday: Marga diary, Apr 18, 1939.

443 transcripts of Hitler's secret speeches of Jan 18 and 25, and Feb 10, 1939 will be found with those of Nov 10, 1938 and Mar 11, 1939 in BA file NS.11/28. For different transcripts of two speeches, see IfZ files F19/10 and ED57, and the diaries of Groscurth, Hassell, Milch, and Eberhard; and Likus' report of Feb 2, 1939.

444 totting-up: or, 'a grand settling of scores.' '*Wenn das Deutsche Reich in irgendeiner absehbaren Zeit in außenpolitische Konflikte kommt, so ist es selbstverständlich, daß wir in Deutschland in allererster Linie daran denken werden, eine große Abrechnung an den Juden zu vollziehen.*'

444 Hitler's speech prophecy: for fifty years we had above our desk in London a framed copy, given to us by Henriette von Schirach, of the next day's *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jan 31, 1939. Its main headline reads, 'ONE OF HITLER'S GREATEST SPEECHES: PROPHETIC WARNING TO INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY.' [EINE DER GRÖSSTEN REDEN ADOLF HITLERS | PROPHETISCHE WARNUNG AN DAS INTERNATIONALE JUDENTUM] The crucial text, buried on an inside page, was checked against the newsreel soundtrack: '*Wenn es dem internationalen Finanzjudentum in und außerhalb Europas gelingen sollte, die Völker noch einmal in einen Weltkrieg zu stürzen, dann wird das Ergebnis nicht die Bolschewisierung der Erde und damit der Sieg des Judentums sein, sondern die Vernichtung der jüdischen Rasse in Europa.*' A warning can be said to have been 'prophetic' only *after* the event.

444 Marga did not notice: Marga diary, Jan 31, 1939.

444 manna: see *e.g.* Wikipedia, which relies on Ian Kershaw and Professor Richard J Evans for its deeper historic insights, *e.g.* '*Am* 30. *Januar* 1939 *kündigte Hitler erstmals im Reichstag die Judenvernichtung an.*'

445 meetings with diplomats: Walther Hewel's note on Hitler's conference with Oswald Pirow, Nov 24, 1938 on plans for solving the Jewish problem. Andreas Hillgruber, *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, vol. i, Frankfurt am Main, 1970.

445 Bloch: see Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Edeljude. Das Leben des Armenarztes Eduard Bloch* (Munich, 2008), p.427.

445 Bloch's farewell letter to Hitler is published in *Collier's*. Jason Cowley, 'The Search for Dr Bloch,' *Granta*, No. 79, Oct 1, 2002.

446 redrafting of the Nuremberg Laws: correspondence between Müller Heydrich, and SS-*Oberf.* Nebe, 1937–1939 in USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 631.

446 Jews to wear a distinguishing badge: SD Hauptamt, II/112 4, Vermerk, Berlin, Nov 14, 1938 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 625).

446 Göring told the gauleiters: SD Hauptamt, II/112 4, Vermerk, Berlin, Feb 8, 1939 (USHMM RSHA roll 8: RGVA, fond 500 opis 1 folder 659). 'Der Führer hat am Sonntag weiterhin entschieden, dass von einer Kenntlich-

machung der Juden aus grundsätzlichen Bedenken abzusehen ist. In der Kenntlichmachung der Juden sehe er voraus fortlaufende Exzesse, die sich insbesondere in bestimmten Gauen immer mehr ausbreiten würden.'

446 Führer made exceptions: Göring addressing the newly constituted *Reichsforschungsrat*, Reich Research Council, on Jul 6, 1942 (he had visited Hitler on Jul 4). A shorthand record is in Milch's papers, MD.58, p.3640ff.

447 Eichmann in Vienna: *Obersturmbannf.* Eichmann to *Obersturmbannf.* Hagen, SD Hauptamt, II/112, Nov 21; and Hagen, II/112 4, Vermerk, Feb 15, 1939: USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 625. – Many of these Sonderachiv documents are now also available, by Michael Wildt in (*ed.*): *Die Judenpolitik des SD 1935–1938. Eine Dokumentation* (Oldenbourg, München 1995).

447 Löwenherz: Eichmann to *Obersturmbannf.* Herbert Hagen, SD Hauptamt, II/112, May 10, 1939: USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 625.

447 *Reichsvereinigung der Juden*: Chef der Sipo, Abt. II, Circular decree to all Gestapo offices, sgd. *Standartenführer* Müller Feb 5. In a further Circular decree of Feb 25, 1939 Müller laid down a sliding scale of 'contributions', from zero from the poorest – assets less than 1,000 marks – to ten percent from those with fortunes of over 800,000 (Carto Film #6D, fols. 45f, 51ff).

447 retraining and 'China' transports: *Obersturmbannf.* Hagen, SD Hauptamt, II/112, Vermerk, May 16, 1939: USHMM RSHA roll 8: fond 500 opis 1 folder 625; for more on the training camps, specifically Jägerlust near Flensburg, see fond 500 opis 1 folder 642 and 643.

447 afforded special treatment, 'Sonderbehandlung': Chef der Sipo, Abt. II, Circular decree an alle Stapoleitstellen im Reich, sgd. Müller, betr. 'Auswanderung der Juden,' Feb 5, 1939 (USHMM RSHA roll 7).

447 financing the 'mob': Massnahmen zur Förderung der Auswanderung minderbemittelter Juden, Feb 25, 1939, *ibid.*

447 building highways: Chef der Sipo, Schnellbrief sgd. Dr Werner Best, Vermerk vom Mar 1, 1939 on the inter-ministerial conference on Feb 28 (USHMM Reel 75, RSHA). – Ministerialrat Bernhard Lösener (*sic*, but Loesener in the document), b. Dec 27, 1890 in Fürstenberg (Oder), arrested for helping a traitor in 1944, d. Aug 28, 1952 in Köln.

447 Himmler family poorly: Marga diary, Feb 2 and 9, 1939; diary Feb 2: on Frau von Ribbentrop: 'She is not well. I often studied her card. There are many things I don't understand.' *Ibid.*, Mar 18: 'She survived her major head surgery well. Unimaginable if anything had gone wrong.'

449 Gudrun wrote: Gudrun Himmler to Marga, Feb 17, 1939 (HL).

449 Dr Franz Setzkorn: Himmler diary, Feb 8, 1939. We were able to draw on this 1939 pocket diary, kindly made available to us by its American

owner, the late James Townsend. (We donated a copy to the Bundesarchiv together with HH's 1935 diary.)

449 funding for Hohenlychen; HH to Gebhardt, Feb 25, 1939: T175, roll 40, pp.1097f.

449 Weizsäcker's note, Feb 14, 1939: the diaries were generously provided to us by his widow, Freifrau Marianne von Weizsäcker. Visited by us at Lake Constance, she expressed astonishment as we were the first historian to inquire about her husband's diary. It has since been published by Leonidas Hill (*ed.*), *Die Weizsäcker Papiere* 1933–1950 (Berlin, 1974).

450 guidelines: NS Presseanweisung, Feb 17, 1939: BA file ZSg.102/14, fol. 164.

450 Warsaw visit: Himmler's diary says Józef Beck came, but some documents suggest it was his deputy.– Prof. Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer,* 1914–1939 (Paderborn, 2010); and see Pol. Archiv des Ausw. Amtes, Botschaft Berlin, Mappe 804, Note Józef Potocki to Lipski, Feb 20, 1939: in Stanislaw Zerko: *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1938-39* (Poznań 1998) p.228.

451 Marga: diary, Mar 1, 1939.

451 Heinz Maria Karl Jost: b. July 9, 1904, son of one pharmacist, brother of another. See Camp 020, Interim Report, Jul 9, 1945, 'Case of Heinz Maria Karl Jost, Chief of Amt VI' (PRO file KV.2/104). – Dr Wilhelm Höttl called Jost a 'tired, lazy individual lacking initiative or the will to work, active at most for only three or four hours a day.' Heydrich wanted rid of him, but the most likely candidate to replace him was *Brigadef.* Dr Stahlecker, and Heydrich feared that this ambitious Austrian was after his job too. See Höttl, 'A Character Sketch of Schellenberg,' Jul 12, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/95).

453 Britain disinterested: *Forschungsamt* intercept N.112,097.

453 Czechs asking for it: Col. Eduard Wagner, letter to his wife Mar 13, 1939. We are grateful to his widow, Elisabeth Wagner, for allowing us to copy all his letters. (Now Sammlung Irving at IfZ).

453 Keitel later wrote: in his IMT death-cell MS. See too *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel (*London, 1965).

453 bouquet at the Adlon: For the letter Mme. Radlova wrote thanking Hitler, see BA file NS.10/18. Propaganda directives to editors are in BA, ZSg 101.

454 Hitler recalled: *Hitler's Table Talk*, May 1942.

454 Hácha's account on Mar 20, 1939: 'Záznam o jednání v Berlíně v noci z 14. na 15. března 1939' in *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943* (Documents on Czechoslovak Politics 1939–1943), vol. ii, Prague, 1966, pp.420–422. Hewel's note is in *ADAP*, D, iv, no. 228.

454 Hácha signed: Based also on the despatch by Robert Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin, to Georges Bonnet, Mar 17, 1939. *The French Yellow Book*, No. 77. – See too U.S. State Dept. interrog. of Keppler; Otto Meissner,

memoir of Oct. 1945, and interrog. of the interpreter Paul Schmidt, Oct. 19–26, 1945 (all on DJ film 34).

455 Wilhelm Keppler to HH, Mar 15, 1939 (NA film T175, roll 32, p.0083). And our interview of Christa Schroeder (IfZ, ZS-2240).

456 British embassy reported: Newton, Prague, to FO, Mar 16, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/22993).

456 ends well: Rommel to his wife Lucie, Mar 15, 1939 (T84, roll R275, p.0015).

456 Alvensleben to Gudrun, Apr 4, 1939: 'Ich hoffe, liebe Püppi, Dir mit diesem Erlebnis recht viel Freude zu bereiten.' (BA file NS19/3666, 4003).

456 Prague no place: Geyr von Schweppenburg, undated MS, IfZ, ZS-680.

Chapter 38: The Masseur

458 catarrh: Himmler diary, Mar 13: 'Katharr', and his note: 'March 12–25: 'entsetzl. Kata~~h~~rr.'

458 at the Hradčany: Hácha's account and Keitel's, *loc. cit.*

459 Jewish Problem in Prague: see Jan Björn Potthast: *Das jüdische Zentralmuseum der SS in Prag: Gegnerforschung und Völkermord im Nationalsozialismus* (Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, 2002).

459 Sonderkommando: Letter from RFSS SD, Hauptamt II/112 to Sonderkommando Prague, Apr 28, 1939; and List of Communists and Jews in Prag, Apr 28, 1939, Carto film #5D. See RFSS SD, SD Hauptamt II/112: Juden in der Tschechoslowakei, Mar 7, 1939; also Judenfrage in der Slowakei, Aug 1939, Carto film #6C.

459 Heydrich got stuck in: Eichmann, Argentina MS, fol. 416.

460 Stalin newsreel: Our interview of Leni Riefenstahl, Jul 1989.

460 Memel regained: Himmler diary; and postcard from Karl Wolff to his wife, Mar 23, 1939 (in private hands).

460 Danzig and Memel: Raeder planned the fleet arrival in Danzig, OKM, Skl. order, Mar 1939. German Naval files obtained in the Naval History Branch, Washington Navy Yard, Washington DC.

461 Hitler reminisces about Memel: *Table Talk*, Jan 27, 1942 midday.

461 Molotov drew laughter: Friedrich Gaus testified in a Nuremberg affidavit that when Ribbentrop related to Stalin on Aug 23, 1939 how the Führer had interpreted the Mar 1939 speech as a Soviet overture, Stalin replied: 'That was the intention' (Libr. of Congress, R H Jackson papers).

461 Lipski takes the deal to Warsaw: Col. Curt Siewert's note on Hitler's discussion with Brauchitsch, Mar 25, 1939, is ND, R-100.

462 the CASE WHITE directive was issued on Apr 3, 1939. For evidence that

Hitler called for it on Mar 31, see the diaries of Wolf Eberhard, Martin Bormann, and Maj. Wilhelm Deyhle, Jodl's adjutant (ND, 1796-PS). On Mar 30, Col. Wagner had written, 'Tomorrow the C-in-C [Brauchitsch] and the Führer get back [to Berlin] and all our briefing notes must be ready by then.' On Apr 1, he wrote, '. . . yesterday, when the Führer took the decision' (*gestern bei der Führerentscheidung*, Eduard Wagner Papers, Sammlung Irving, IfZ).

463 sacked domestics: Marga's diary, Mar 29, 1939.

463 theatre was going to the dogs: Marga's diary, Mar 15, 1939.

464 Schuhknecht: Ulrich von Hassell diary, Apr 5, 1939: p.88, with a (later deleted) note on p.478 by his widow Ilse von Hassell, the first editor. It is not impossible that the drivers 'Hans' and 'Schuhknecht' are one and the same. Denied the means to contact his wife from prison, and being sworn to secrecy, are common to both stories.

464 in Gmund: Marga diary, Mar 29, Apr 4, 7, 15, 1939.

465 *Medizinalrat* Felix Kersten, b. Sep 30, 1898, Tartu, Livonia, in what is now Estonia, to estate-manager Friedrich Ferdinand Kersten und Olga von Stübing; d. of a heart attack on Apr 16, 1960 in Hamm, Germany, *en route* to Paris (where Gen. de Gaulle was to award him the *Légion d'honneur*). He signed a summary of his early career on Feb 26, 1921, in Finnish national archives, *Kansallisarkisto*, Helsinki, a collection of personnel files, *Ansioluettelokokoelma*, Number 30769: officer training in Beverloo, north-east of Antwerp, Nov 1, 1917 to Feb 10, 1918; enlisted Oct 5, 1914 in I.R. 36 and 93, and Central Polizei Baltenland. Kersten saw service on the French (Somme, Verdun) and Italian fronts, and the Dardanelles, being wounded at Verdun in late summer 1917. On his career, see a report on 'Kessler' (*sic*) by the US military attaché in Stockholm, Mar 2, 1945; *Uusi Suomi*, Helsinki, Feb 7 and 8, 1945, and also *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, Feb 1, 1945, and *Dagens Nyheter*, Feb 3, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474). A 56-minute documentary, 'Kuka oli Felix Kersten' (Who Was Felix Kersten?), for Finnish television by Mandart Productions in 1998; Arno Kersten was interviewed. — John H Waller, *The Devil's Doctor: Felix Kersten and the Secret Plot to Turn Himmler against Hitler* (New York, 2002), is marred by faulty picture captions. – Kersten says, 'Durch deutsche Patienten wurde Himmler auf mich aufmerksam und konsultierte mich im März 1939.' The 'masseur' first enters the Himmler diary in Gmund on Apr 4, 1939.

465 August Diehn: CEO of the German Kalisyndikat.

466 Irmgard Kersten: She bore Felix two sons, Ulf (1938–2010) and Årno (b. 1940). After Irmgard's death in 2004 Årno took control of the diaries and the family photos. (Information from Ulf and his confidant Dr Leif

Bergdahl in May 2005.) Kersten's original 1947 book *Samtal med Himmler* is now impossible to find: Ulf found a copy of the *Kersten Memoirs* 1940–1945 (1956) on the market at an outlandish price; he believed that Count Bernadotte's widow had bought up the others.

466 concocted diaries: for a comparison of the Kersten memoirs with 116 actual Kersten sessions referenced in the 1941–42 Himmler *Dienstkalendar,* see forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=144088. For instance, for Nov 11, 1941 Kersten records, 'To-day Himmler is very depressed. He has just come from the Führer's Chancellery. I gave him treatment. After much pressure and questions as to what was the matter with him, he told me that the destruction of the Jews is being planned.' But Himmler's diary shows that he was in East Prussia – not Berlin.

466 Bonnier: Hugh Trevor-Roper told us he read these diaries when he visited Kersten in Sweden in the 1950s, and he described their content to us on Jan 26, 1968. Ulf Kersten recalls Trevor-Roper arriving in his sports car.

466 Ryti diary: Kauko Rumpunen & Ohto Manninen (*eds.*) *'Käymme omaa erillistä sotaamme.' Risto Rytin päiväkirjat 1940–1944* (Helsinki, 2006) Diaries of Risto Ryti 1940–1944; entries for Jul 31, 1942 and Oct 14, 1943.

466 forgeries: After 1945, Kersten was eager for Swedish medals and citizenship. In 1972 Dutch historian Louis de Jong proved that Kersten's documents (about how he had prevented an April 1941 plan to deport Dutch Jews to Lublin) were post-war forgeries. In 1978 'Gerald Fleming' (born Gerhard Flehinger in Mannheim) said that tests proved a crucial Bernadotte document was forged: see 'Die Herkunft des „Bernadotte-Briefs" an Himmler vom 10. März 1945,' *VfZ*, 26 (1978), pp.571–600, and Amitzur Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine 1948* (New York, 1989), pp.41–3: 'He [Kersten] began with a "diary" supposedly kept by himself since 1941, then followed this up with "copies" of letters – the originals of which were never found.' Kersten's documents always seemed of doubtful authenticity, wrote Hugh Trevor-Roper to Ilan on May 26, 1983. – 'Himmlers Leibarzt: Masseur des Massenmörders,' *Spiegel* Online, Nov 8, 2012 (https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/himmlers-leibarzt-felix-kersten-a-947795.html). But Himmler's friend Charlotte Darré considered Kersten's *Totenkopf und Treue*, Hamburg, 1952, 'eine gute Quelle über Himmler': note by Krausnick, München, Aug 31, 1954: ZS-2208.

466 Hitler's medical dossier: See *Kersten Memoirs,* chapter xxiii, 'Report on Hitler's Illness,' with its 'diary' entry of Dec 12, 1942. According to this report, a paralysis of syphilitic origin that had first emerged in Hitler in 1937 recurred in 1942. Quite apart from the absence of any such episodes in the medical records on Professor Theo Morell's 'Patient A' (Hitler), his blood-test records and the Wassermann and Meinecke tests designed for sexually transmitted diseases discount this. David Irving, *The Secret*

Diaries of Hitler's Doctor (London & New York, 1983).

469 Dachau visit, Apr 25, 1939: Minutenprogramm, etc., BA file NS19/1792. IMT Interrog. of Luitpold Schallermeier, May 7, 1947 by Norbert G Barr. An auction house sold one of the albums, the one presented to a later highly decorated Panzer officer, Hermann Breith (1892–1964): 'To Herrn Oberst Breith in remembrance of the visit to the SS on April 25, 1939, H. Himmler, Reichsführer SS.'

469 *Schutzhaft*, 'administrative custody': we adopt the useful euphemism now used in Israel for internment of enemies without trial. The statistics (initalled by HH, '25.IV.39 HH') and *Minutenprogramm* are in BA file NS.19/1792, fols. 226f. Of the 3,479 inmates on that day, 2,090 were *Schutzhäftlinge*, 712 Jews, 108 Jehovah's Witnesses, 296 work-shy (Reich), 138 work-shy (local), 50 politically suspect, 22 awaiting deportation, 16 emigrés and three 'race-polluters'. – By comparison, Britain's current prison population is over 87,000; that of the United States over two million.

469 Dachau: Interrog. of Friedrich von Eberstein, May 6, 1947 by Curt Ponger.

469 Varini: HH, Aktennotiz, A/1/13, May 2, 1939, in private hands. – Tacitus, *Germania*, 40: '*reudigni deinde et aviones et anglii et varini et eudoses et suardones et nuithones. Nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune nerthum, id est terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, invehi populis arbitrantur.*' – 'There follow in order the Reudignians, and Aviones, and Angles, and Varinians, and Eudoses, and Suardones and Nuithones; all defended by rivers or forests. Nor in one of these nations does aught remarkable occur, only that they universally join in the worship of Herthum (Nerthus); that is to say, the Mother Earth.' (Translation 1877 by Church and Brodribb).

470 Himmler's photo: Henderson to Sir Orme Sargent ('Moley') at the FO, Jun 16, 1939 (PRO file FO.371/23020).

470 discreetly noted. See *e.g.* the pocket diaries of Milch (our microfilm DI-59).

38*: Oddballs and Soothsayers*

471 Otto Wilhelm Rahn, b. Michelstadt, Hesse, Feb 18, 1904. SS *Obersturmbannf.* Ullmann, Vermerk, Dec 12, 1938: BDC file: SS Personalakte Rahn. – State-secretary Naumann of the RMfVuP wrote about Rahn to Rudi Brandt on Oct 23, 1943: 'Leider ist dem Autor ein Mißgeschick passiert, indem er wegen Vergehens gegen §175 verfolgt wurde.' A homosexual stationed with him at Homberg in 1936 had denounced him: so he told Kurt Eggers, at whose home he showed up in a deranged state shortly before his death. Eggers (b. Nov 1905), a disillusioned curate, was later editor-in-chief of the SS organ *Das schwarze Korps*, The Black Corps. Martin Bormann ruled that Rahn's suicide be treated as *gRs.*, said Dr

Klopfer, of Bormann's staff. Rahn's book *Luzifers Hofgesind* (1937), deemed to be anti-Semitic, was banned in the Soviet zone of Germany after 1945. See the May 2011 paper by Richard Stanley, 'Raiders of the Lost Grail. Otto Rahn and the Nazi quest for the secret of the Cathars' in www.forteantimes.com/features/articles/5407/raiders_of_the_lost_grail.html.

472 Walter Schellenberg: Schellenberg, b. Jan 16, 1910; he joined the SD in 1934, and then the personnel department of the RSHA; d. March 31, 1952.– 'Autobiography in Stockholm, Jun 1945' (PRO file KV.2/97; and Trevor-Roper papers), *and see* BAOR, Interrog. Report 030/121, on his secretary Maria-Luise Wilhelmina Schienke, Nov 28, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/99).

472 Dr Wilhelm Höttl, Chief Referent of RSHA Gruppe VI-E, 'A Character Sketch of Schellenberg,' Jul 12, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/95). Höttl stated that after Schellenberg remarried, Kaltenbrunner had to order him to his wife's bedside for a difficult confinement. His poorly legible memoirs are in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte. Swiss publisher Scherz bought the MS but in Switzerland's interests decided not to publish because of Schellenberg's dealings with the Swiss intelligence chief Col. Roger Masson. The CIA learned that Schellenberg's widow had far more, 'in a suitcase' (RG 263, CIA Name Files, box 112: Walter Schellenberg, vol. i). Heydrich's adjutant Neumann, Schellenberg's friend and pre-war flatmate, said in 1977: '[Er] hat manches doch etwas aufgeblasen.' Vermerk über Bespr. mit H H Neumann, Jan 11, 1977 (Tobias Collection). André Deutsch published *The Schellenberg Memoirs* in 1956 in London; they had been extensively 'reworked' by publisher Deutsch or, said Neumann, by the journalist Klaus Harpprecht. Better are the products of British officers interrogating Schellenberg in Camp 020 at Ham, south-west London, published by Reinhard R Doerries as *Hitler's Last Chief of Foreign Intelligence: Allied Interrogations of Walter Schellenberg* (Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003).

472 Werner Best: Interrogated at IMT on Apr 28, 1948 by Erik J Ortmann.

473 Schellenberg's comrades 'look upon him as a traitor,' wrote Lina Heydrich sharply to Jean D Vaughan, Dec 1951; and on Jan 18, 1952. 'He does not acquire my esteem': *ibid*., Nov 22, 1951 (Jean Vaughan papers).

473 astrology and camps: Schellenberg at Camp 020, 'My knowledge of concentration camps in Germany,' ca. Aug. 1945 (PRO file KV.2/98). In the same year his wife wrote a note listing the latest astrological predictions and warnings Jan 4 – Aug 2, 1945: see Interrog. of Schellenberg on documents found in his property, Oct 12, 1945 (*ibid*.).

473 Gaulke shot: BAOR, Interrog. Report 030/121, of Schellenberg's long-time secretary Maria-Luise Wilhelmina Schienke, Nov 28, 1945 (PRO file KV.2/99).

473 Schellenberg not taken seriously: so he told Paul Baumert when they

shared a sleeping car to HH's HQ, Hochwald, in 1943. IMT interrog. on Jan 20, 1948 by Norbert Barr.

473 Hedwig Potthast's father was Karl August Friedrich Potthast, a former *Feldwebel* in the Westphalian Pionierbataillon No. 7, the Protestant son of a *Ziegelmeister,* b. in Brakelsiek, Dec 5, 1879. Her mother Wilhelmina Amalie Dorothea Potthast *née* Hessmann, b. Brakelsiek, Nov 13, 1885, and her family traced back to 1736. Hedwig's older sister 'Thilde,' was Mathilde Wilhelmina Sophie Potthast, b. Mar 9, 1907: see Mathilde's birth certificate, Mar 15, 1907 and Hedwig's genealogical table dated Apr 22, 1944, (HL), which might imply that, with her next child by Himmler due, she hoped to marry him. – Personal correspondence with Hedwig Potthast from Thilde and their ill-fated brother Walter is in BA file N1126/37.

474 glory of Greater Germany: *Stars and Stripes*, Sep 6, 1945, has a mocking article on p.5: HIMMLER'S GIRLFRIEND LEFT WITH 2 LITTLE SOUVENIRS.

474 American officers: SAIC 15, Interrog. of Hedwig Potthast, May 22 1945, NA: RG 496, HQ USFET, SAIC reports. Container #1295; and cf. US Seventh Army, Interrog. SAIC/X/5, May 24, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474). See Gerd Heidemann's interview with Karl Wolff, Aug 18, 1978.

475 Milch diary, Jun 2, 1937 (our microfilm DJ-59).

475 left her Church: Bescheinigung über den Austritt aus einer Religionsgesellschaft öffentlichen Rechts, betr. die Sekretärin Hedwig Potthast, vom May 2, 1939 (HL). There were tax implications for leaving a church.

475 Dr Karl Fahrenkamp to Marga, Jan 10, 1940 (BDC, Himmler file XIV).

475 winter solstice: letter from Hedwig Potthast to her sister Thilde, Nov 11, 1941 (BA file N.1126). Thilde was a teacher at Kolmar-Berg, Luxembourg.

475 presumably Jun 22, 1939: Himmler's 1939 Taschenkalender shows that he flew on June 21 to Pomerania, celebrated *Sonnwendfeier* (the summer solstice) near Kolberg on the Baltic coast that night, then spent the night and flew back to Berlin on Jun 22 where he played tennis. There are no special markings on either date.

476 Caspar-Theyß-Strasse is in Berlin's Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district. Wiligut had lived there since 1935. Hedwig Potthast moved into No. 33 between Aug 3 and 12, 1941: see the letters addressed to her there by her brother Walter, killed in action, Dec 1941. Her 'baby bump' was by then showing, hence the need for the move.

476 Wolff decided: Heidemann, conv. with Karl Wolff, Aug 18, 1978.

477 the brooch: Rudi Brandt to Werkstätte K. Gahr, München, Jun 8, 1939 (in private hands).

478 interrog. of SS *Oberf.* Eugen Dollmann, CSDIC/WEA/SD57. It 'would appear to have been an *affaire* more in a practical than a sentimental sense'

(PRO file WO.208/4474).

478 kept existence a secret: CCPWE #32 report X-P 12, Darré in conv. with US army officer, May 29, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474. – Hans Jüttner (21 AGp DIC/D/106), CSDIC(UK) BLA, Jun 10, 1945 and Himmler's brother Gebhard (*ibid*.) knew only the outline of the affair (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR, 1941 Investigative Records Repository [the CIC files], personal name files, box 85, XE 000632: Himmler dossier).

478 Hedwig's letters: US Seventh Army, Interrog. of Hedwig Potthast, 'Reichsführer Himmler's mistress,' SAIC/X/5, May 24, 1945 (PRO file WO.208/4474).

478 Dr Karl Fahrenkamp to Hedwig Potthast, Sep 10, 1940 (HL).

39: *Marga Makes a Request*

480 Schade: Himmler memo, May 24, 1939; BDC files, SSO: Eberstein.

480 Schade case: Hermann Freiherr von Schade, b. Oct 3, 1888, d. Oct 26, 1966. He headed SS *Oberabschnitt* Süd from Jun 12 to early July 1939.

480 Friedrich Karl Eberstein b. Jan 14, 1894; PRO file WO.208/5226. He had joined the Party in 1922; was Munich's *Polizeipräsident* from Oct 1936. He claimed to have been sacked on Apr 20, 1945 for disobeying the orders of Gauleiter Giesler. On Oct 24, 1947 acquitted of war crimes charges. Eberstein outlived Schade, surviving until 1979, sick or not.

481 Eberstein afterwards had HH's 'rambling speech' at the Deutsches Museum transcribed: 'I've still got the photos of it at home, and the speech.'

481 Munich Italian parade. Transcript of Eberstein's 1975 conv. with Richard Schulze-Kossens, who inherited his papers (IfZ, ZS-0539).

481 Letter Martin Bormann to HH dated Jun 26, 1939 .

484 Gen. d. Kav. Wilhelm von Knochenhauer (commander, Wehrkreis X) had died in Hamburg on Jun 28. Marga diary, Jul 2, 1939.

484 The quotations are from Marga's diary, Jun 2, Jun 4, Jun 26, Jul 1, 1939, and from an undated letter by her.

485 Valepp. Marga diary, Jun 16, Aug 8, 1939.

485 Schade: Marga diary, Jul 24, 1939.

485 Flew south: Marga diary, Jul 24, Aug 13, 1939.

40: *Last Days of Peace*

486 read new book: Marga diary, Aug 8, 1939.

487 Marga's father began his final illness on Jun 4; he died Aug 15, 1939. His death evidently left her unmoved, diary, May 3, Jun 26. She did not

accompany her sisters to the funeral.

488 Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg, diary, Oct 5, 1939. — Rosenberg's very informative handwritten diary, 1936–1944, had a shameful history. Lieut. John W English, USNR, of the OSS mission to Britain, learned that in 1945 Rosenberg's papers had been evacuated from Berlin to Lichtenfels (in the US 7th Army area) and were concealed behind a false wall at Schloss Banz. On July 20, 1945 English wrote: 'It is of interest to note that Col. George M Allan of Judge Advocate General's office of the 3rd Army proceeded to Schloss Banz three weeks ago and took from the Rosenberg records a tin box containing, according to report, Rosenberg's Diary and certain personal papers' (NA: RG.226, entry 148, box 76).

The Rosenberg Diary went missing during the Nuremberg trials while being handled by the Jewish prosecutor Robert M W Kempner (1899–1993). We chased it for forty-six years. Fragments were published by Hans-Günther Seraphim, in *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs aus den Jahren 1934/1935 und 1939/1940* (Musterschmidt, Göttingen, 1956). Kempner published a few further unknown lines from the diary, which confirmed our suspicions that he had purloined it. He denied knowledge of its whereabouts when asked directly by Dr Elke Fröhlich, who interviewed him on our behalf; and by the late Dr Anton Hoch of the IfZ. In fact Kempner had indeed removed it ('contrary to law and proper procedure,' as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security stated), together with 300 boxes of IMT papers found *post mortem* at his retirement home in Philadelphia.

Kempner gave the stolen Diary to his girlfriend, Margot Lipton, a Jewess who was his long-time legal secretary. After his death she passed it to her new friend, elderly publisher and professor Herbert Richardson of Niagara Falls, N.Y.; but like the HH letters it was 'hot property', untouchable. It was recovered in Lewiston, New York, in a dawn raid on June 13, 2013 by police, FBI, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) .

Written on 425 loose-leaf pages the Diary is now, after U.S. legal proceedings, held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, who have expertly transcribed it. Possibly disappointed by the discovery that nothing in it disproved Rosenberg's claim to have known nothing of any systematic killing of Jews, they lost interest in it.

In 2015 the Rosenberg diary, which had been illegally concealed from Rosenberg's IMT defence lawyers, was finally published in Germany with much dutiful hand-wringing, as 'ein Schlüsseldokument zur Geschichte von Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust,' by Jürgen Matthäus and Frank Bajohr (*eds.*), *Alfred Rosenberg. Die Tagebücher von 1934 bis 1944 (*S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2015).

489 HH with Karl Wolff at the Berghof, Aug 22, 1939: see IMT interrog. of Wolff, Oct 28, 1947 by Fred Kaufmann. HH's diary has him there only on Aug 21, which suggests Wolff dated his presence wrongly from memory.

488 Col. Nikolaus von Vormann's diary, letters, and papers were generously provided by his widow. We have placed copies in IfZ, Sammlung Irving.

488 Julius Schaub MS, in IfZ, Sammlung Irving.

488 laissez-passer for Kersten: HH letter, Aug 25, 1939.

490 Marga latter to HH, Aug 26, 1939 (HL).

490 running commentary: A note dictated by HH, Aug 27, 1939, signed 'Pt.' (Potthast). See the facsimile printed as a stray item in BA, Brammer Sammlung, ZSg.101/9091.

491 Abwehr colonel: *Helmuth Groscurth. Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938–1940*: *eds*. Helmut Krausnick and Harold C Deutsch.

491 Heydrich letter to Lina *et al*., Sep 1, 1939. Heydrich's adjutant Neumann confirmed to Fritz Tobias on Jan 11, 1977 that the 'anecdotes' alluded to Hochlinden and to the lethal Tukhachevsky scam. By agreement *Der Spiegel* omitted the postscript identifying Neumann when they published the letter on Feb 2, 1950.

492 Heydrich kept Lina in the dark: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Feb 16, 1952 (Jean Vaughan papers).

492 Himmler's 1939 diary was made available to us by autograph collector James E Townsend, of Houston: we provided a copy to the Bundesarchiv on DVD, where it is now in Himmler's papers.

495 Lina in the dark: Lina Heydrich to Jean Vaughan, Feb 16, 1952 (Jean Vaughan papers).

493 Letter from Gudrun to HH, Sept 2, 1939 (HL).

497 Winston Churchill, in April 1945, would confide that he was inclined to spare HH (British Museum, Adml. Cunningham diary, April 1945).

493 Sonderzug Heinrich. Extract from CSDIC(UK) report SIR.1178 (PRO file WO.208/4474). — Lt. Col. Hermann Miltzow stated that its call sign was DSQ. 'It was always well guarded.' SAIC/X/1, Apr 14, 1945, in RG 496, HQ USFET, SAIC reports, container #1296.

493 Brandt recalled: Extract from CSDIC(UK) report SIR.1178 (PRO file WO.208/4474); IMT interrog. of *Standartenführer* Dr Rudolf Brandt on Aug 20, 1946 by Mr Walter Rapp; and 21 AGp/DIC/D/CI/16, Interim Report, Rudolf Brandt, interrogated by Capt. John Raven, CSDIC, BLA, Jun 10, 1945 (NA file RG.319, Records of Army Staff, IRR, Investigative Records Repository, name files, box 85, XE 000632: Himmler dossier).

494 Gen. Fedor von Bock diary, Sep 3, 1939: BA file N.22/1.

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